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PARADISE



PARADISE

A novel by
ESTHER FORBES



1937

Chatto and Windus

LONDON

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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To
Harriette Merrifield Forbes



PROLOGUE

“ . . . and humbly we petition that, for want of meadow and straitness of accommodation in Boston, where now we do dwell, we be permitted to remove ourselves and settle upon lands lying by the River Catacoonamaug, this being nine miles north to Sudbury and twenty miles inland from Boston, and inhabited now by but a handful of the savages, who being approached, are agreeable to sale. We believe that this plantation will be of great gain to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and to ourselves (your servants), and we, being a goodly number of sober persons, beg that we be allowed separate village there, having selected men and militia for to protect us and minister and other benefits of township.

“And on this day of October 21, 1639, we set our names and shall forever pray.”

Then followed the sixteen names of the petitioners, according to each man's degree. Andrew Redbank as minister was the first to sign. Next Jude Parre, Gentleman. After him, Mr. Hurlingheart, who also could write the proud word, “gentleman.” Next came miller and taverner, pewtersmith, wheelwright, a number of yeomen and artisans. Some of these humble folk signed with difficulty. Others only made their marks.

The Governor and his Assistants saw by the very names upon the petition the town was like to flourish. It was neither too yeasty with gentlemen nor too doughy with those of less estate.

“Like to be a good and wholesome loaf for our Lord's table,” said Governor Winthrop. “I recommend that this petition of township be allowed.”

With these words Canaan came into being.

THICK and strong, as high as a man's middle, as high as a man's waist, the wild grass grew along the Catacoonamaug. And there was store of arable lands and abundance of forest, fit for tar and lumber, but it was the wild grass that tempted the bold planters from the safety of the sea-coast out into the drowsing heart of the wilderness. For where grass grows, there (with God's help!) cattle shall grow too. There was a fortune to be made in cattle, and they were the men to make it.

In vain did the benevolent Mr. Redbank preach a sermon to his flock, gathered round him in a tavern chamber in Boston, concerning the Golden Calf the Israelites had worshipped to their ruin. He exhorted them to remember, when in the following spring they should move out to Canaan, God as well as cattle should be served. It was more of cattle than of God they were thinking.

Before they had left Boston the Governor was shaking his head over them. "Sober" folk, indeed! One of the petitioners had given the watch a black eye. The two grim Bailey brothers had cheated an honest Ipswich farmer in a transaction concerning a small brindled cow. Another, set in stocks for swilling liquor. And so it went. They seemed a stiff-necked and turbulent folk but, on the whole, well equipped for their adventure.

The Court of Assistants saw that Mr. Redbank was of too gentle a temper to cope with these future Canaanites. The welfare of the new town would, the authorities believed, rest upon one man—the proud and irascible Jude Parre. Because of his wife's fortune he was the richest of the petitioners, and he was of the greatest learning and the highest birth.

Jude Parre came from an ancient, indigent, Kentish family. There had been roisterers, saints, suicides, and generals in his stock, and but few sensible people. He had a dark, lop-sided face, bright and ugly, and a black stiletto beard. He spoke and gestured with vehemence, but his impressiveness was lost when he was silent or moody. Then he looked like sick or moulting bird, with hunched-up shoulders and lustreless eyes.

Until he came to the New England his life had been restless and wasted. From the University of Cambridge and the study of theology he had turned to Padua and medicine. From Padua he had wandered to Leyden. Then, suddenly, learning and student life had sickened him. As a mere clerk he had gone to Hamburg for the London Trading Adventurers, and lived for five years in a stale and beery room above a malt-house and kept books. But again he wished change. Somewhat late he decided that the world of snivelling merchants was not for him, and remembered that the Parres were not traders but gentlemen. He was penniless and well over thirty, yet once more would he shift his way of life. So he went to London.

In London he met his distant cousin, Elizabeth Fenton, for he was secretary to her father, a leading Puritan. Jude Parre became one of the group who met often at Mr. Fenton's pleasant Thames-side house to discuss the seething affairs. England was boiling. In politics the Puritan was the liberal of the moment. Anyone who believed weak Charles I should be controlled must join with the Puritans. Four of the great earls of England had espoused this cause. The House of Commons, consisting of landed gentry, was Puritan, and, if it had not been for the clergymen appointed by the Crown, the House of Peers might have been so as well. But during the long discussions of Parliament, tonnage and poundage, Laud, Bishop of Bath and Wells, King, and brewing civil war, the fair and

virginal Elizabeth had nothing to say. She would listen intelligently to every man as he spoke, turning reproachful eyes from speaker to speaker, and say nothing.

But when she and her cousin were alone (as sometimes happened) in the garden beside the Thames, she spoke rapidly and with pious passion. It was not of King or Parliament she was thinking but of God's Kingdom here upon earth. The austere loveliness of her voice and way of life made a profound impression upon Jude, who had come to loathe the ribaldry of his Continental years. In his heart he knew they were not suited, but something, more akin to restlessness than love, was sweeping him beyond reason.

It was a strange upheaval in nature that made the chilly Elizabeth love the brilliant, wasted, penniless secretary. But they were married, and Jude came to live in the broad riverside mansion with his wife and wealthy father-in-law. Now within marriage and in the open went on the disharmony that had always existed between them. Elizabeth did not care for his manner of dress, which was somewhat gaudy. She thought—once they were married—it would be easy to change so little a matter as the shape of his beard. She preferred a spade-beard, such as her father wore, to the truculent stiletto beard of her husband. He would not change. She wished him to sit much at home. He liked to go to friends' houses, taverns, play-houses. In tears she admitted, first to him and then to herself, that he did not love her. Nor did he love her as she loved him.

Three sons were born, and her father died. King Charles proceeded on his ill-advised opposition to everything, and Parliament was adjourned, not to meet again for eleven years. Plymouth had been settled some years before by the Pilgrims (a low, unlovely sect these Brownists seemed to the aristocratic Elizabeth), and the Massachusetts Bay Colony had come into

being. Elizabeth talked much of this far distant Boston. She would sigh over the brotherly love there put in practice. No Buckingham nor Laud, no contention, no strife. All was love. She spoke as one tired to death of evil old London—with its harlots crying in the streets, its open drains.

One day her husband casually announced to her that he had decided to throw in his lot with this new Boston. If he had said he was going to the Vatican to join the Pope, she could have shown no more violent disagreement with his wishes. She told him the time of civil war was to hand. It behoved every Puritan to stand by England in this her crisis.

And he would escape, would he?

Yes, he would escape.

"But if you would rather bide on here in London, Elizabeth, I will not command you." So she saw he was capable of deserting her and his three sons.

Then she told him, with thin weak arms about him, that she too would go—but that this exodus would be her death and the death of her three sons. Yet would she go with him.

It seemed he preferred even their death to the stagnation he now felt crawling up over him from the very cobbles of London and the murk of the Thames.

So in the fall of 1639 Jude Parre came to Boston, and with him came Elizabeth, his wife, and Anselm, Rufus, and Will, his three sons.

3

AT the beginning of spring, Sagamore Chicken-Chuck (as the white men discourteously misunderstood his name) removed his people from the five square miles where their village and planting lands had been. Here in the future should stand Canaan. He was pleased that these friendly and powerful folk

with steel knives, barking muskets, and strange magic were ready to dwell within his territory. His tribe was small and, until the coming of the white men, had always lived in fear of fiercer tribes to north and west. He liked his white brothers nor did he guess that the mysterious disease which thirty years before had turned every Algonquin encampment into a charnel house was their first gift to the Indian.

So Chicken-Chuck built himself a new village close by a cedar swamp, and this was called Swamp Town. It was hard, the summer of 1640, to keep his young people at home. All they wished to do was to hang about and watch the curious customs of their neighbours. Nothing about them—their Sabbath observance, their industry, their gunpowder, their beards, or their large families—amused the savages more than the loathly way this undignified people cheated calves of their mothers' milk. Sagamore Chicken-Chuck's favourite dish was maggots. The white men in refusing this delicacy were not half so courteous as the Indians, refusing to drink milk.

So friendly was this little tribe of Tawnies, the settlers did not move out in one armed mass but came in groups of one or two families, built their huts of wattle and daub, tended their beasts on the open grazing land, cleared wood, dug saw pits. Then more came—and more.

But in their coming, Chicken-Chuck saw no danger—only protection.

4

THAT first summer only the cattle, the pumpkins, and the strange new Indian corn prospered. The fickle English corn refused to head. The rye was ruined. When the leaves began to drop from the trees, Mr. Parre advised that most of the cattle be driven back to the seaboard for sale. There was not

fodder enough to feed them through the winter. The drovers who took the beasts to Boston would bring back to Canaan the last few of the settlers who had not already moved out. These were mostly women and children, and among them would be Mrs. Parre and her three sons.

Some of the women and children walked the twenty-odd miles to Canaan following an Indian trail over swamps and through brooks. At least one carried a gander on her back. They were stout and lusty folk and helped the drovers manage the pack-horses, laden with lime, nails, salt, and woven cloth. These foot-farers whooped and hawed at the horses, laughed heartily, and were clothed in the good Lincoln green, russet, and scarlet always loved by English yeomen. Their eyes were as bright, their cheeks as rosy, as though no awful Jehovah watched their least action. They were thinking more of the great price the cattle, fattened at Canaan, had fetched.

It was only Mrs. Parre who thought of that sermon concerning the Golden Calf Mr. Redbank had preached the winter before. Never in worldly old London had she heard so much talk of money. Patiently she bestrode the gentle nag her husband had sent out for her. Her attire was sombre, and her face more so. She was sick and worried. Her black French hood shadowed a sharp, white face, and her sensitive, trembling nose seemed to have grown even longer since she had left London.

Her two youngest boys rode the horse with her. Little Will she held in her arms. Rufus was behind her on a pillion. Anselm rode with his nurse, but some of the way he preferred to trot along on his own feet. He was afraid of the strange children and whooping women. Anselm had just been breeched, and the thinness of his shanks was even more apparent now than when he had been in petticoats. The mother could feel

the little bones of Will as he rode before her. For these children there had been first the horrors of the sea voyage, then a year visiting her husband's cousin, the Widow Macey, in Boston. This house in High Street had been comfortable enough, but the boys had come down with measles and then with whooping-cough. Now they were thin, yellow shadows. She could not forgive her husband that he had made them, and her, suffer so. "Only let him see," she cried in her heart, "what sickness and death his rashness has led us to!"

She knew that because of her father's money Jude Parre was one of the wealthiest gentlemen in the Bay Colony. Poor enough he had been, when first she had met with him. Now that he had money, how he liked to spread himself—he who had lived for years like a varlet among the poverty-stricken students of the world! Thus wrapped in reproach and despair, her legs aching from the saddle, her eyes dry, her lips tight, she rode down into Canaan.

Word had come of the cavalcade's approach. By the time it reached the Goose Common, the entire village of sixty or seventy people was out to meet them. When they heard the great price their creatures had fetched in Boston they filled the air with their shouts, threw up sweaty caps, and slapped each other's backs. Hardly did they give poor Mr. Redbank (looking so decent, even here, in black Geneva gown and white bands) a chance to offer fitting prayer. Everybody tried to make Mrs. Parre welcome. It seemed to her that already, after only one summer in the wilderness, their accents had coarsened. She drew back, abashed. With those who insisted, she shook hands, but she was amazed that the disreputable Tom Pigge put out a dirty paw to her. And with him was that comical-looking young she whom no one believed to be his proper

wife. For with the coming of the Piggess to Canaan, immorality came as well.

"Twenty-five pounds for my red heifer! Lord love us. She was never worth it."

"Did you get them nails I asked of you in exchange for my fat sow?"

"We'll all be rich."

"Mr. Parre won't long be the only one with money in his wallet."

"You make another prayer now, Parson. Give thanks for our good fortune. We've time to listen now, proper."

Only the two Baileys were dissatisfied with the price their creatures fetched. No matter how much they might get they would always want more.

But where, all this terrible time, was Jude? In vain the weary woman, with the little boys clinging to her skirts, looked about. At last he came. His had been the first house to be built, and it was the only one across the Catacoonamaug, for after it was started the town had voted to hold the land on that side of the river as cattle commons. So word of the arrival had come to him late. Hardly was it his fault that he was not to hand to greet his wife—but she never forgave him. It was as if this were his last chance to pleasure her, and failing her this time (as he had a hundred times before) she was determined from now on to expect nothing more from him. Then she would never be disappointed. As he came, smiling in his lop-sided way, through the crowd, she noticed how respectfully caps were pulled off and curtsies bobbed. It was because of him that they had flourished. In her heart Elizabeth had had a certain contempt for her unsuccessful husband, but his failure was part of him and she understood and loved it in her convulsive way. Now that at last he was a success,

seeming in this unlikely spot to have come into his own, she felt he was lost to her forever. It was a lean kiss she offered him.

Before he even greeted his own sons, he turned to the villagers and bade them all to his own Founder's House to drink up the keg of sack he had ordered out from Boston. This, in honour of his lady's coming.

His lady's head was aching badly. If only she might be alone for a little! It was too much, after the tedium of the ride, to entertain a whole village. And what a village it was! How proud they were of their Goose Common and the feeble row of ill-built huts about it! A fairly decent parsonage, a cellar dug for the meeting-house. Charred stumps and great boulders everywhere. It was worse than anything she could have imagined.

"Be of heart, my Elizabeth," his voice came to her through her maze of despair. "Things are not so bad. Be of good heart." But he did not offer to carry Will, although her arms ached and the child complained.

She crossed the river on foot by a narrow plank bridge Mr. Parre boasted he had built with his own hands. "This house I will show you now," he said, "is for your first winter only, and 'tis on the wrong side of the river. I have already begun something very large and handsome on t'other side. It's framed already. So do not be discouraged because your first home is not so great."

Not even these words could prepare her for the actual sight of Founder's House. A miserable affair of sods and logs, with a wooden chimney and a thatched roof. "But 'twill be warm in winter," he assured her.

A house of two rooms and a loft only, and yet here her husband and herself, her three sons, their nurse, and four

indentured servants would all live like swine in sty. Never once would she be able to go into a room, close the door, and be alone.

Mr. Parre, hoping to hearten her, took her outdoors again and bade her look across the river and see the new house rising. River? Was it for that puny river she had left the Thames? "I shall call this new house Paradise," he said, "after the manor my grandfather built in Kent; that too was Paradise, from some punning connection with our name." She looked. Already two vast stone chimneys rose. She saw the skeleton peaks of roofs. It stood before a hoary oak, and upon a sloping bank. The sight was seemly, she admitted. "Seemly? Why, it's to be the great house of this county. This, my New English Paradise. . . ." He laughed, rubbed his hands, and jerked his sharp beard about.

This grandiose vision, this hope where there was no hope, overcame her. She bowed her head and wept.

5

WINTERS froze Canaan. Springs thawed her. Summers seared. One year the harvest would break hearts with its paucity, and the next backs with its bounty. Then once more the close howling of the wolves and the icy grip of winter. But all was now in order.

The fence-viewer viewed the fences. The tithingmen saw to it that all kept Sabbath and refrained from evil discourse, that husbands and wives treated one another with due courtesy, that children learned the Catechism, that folk of mean estate did not ape the costly, gaudy raiment of their betters, that unaccountable strangers did not linger, that liquor was not swilled.

Twice a week, on Sabbath Day and once at Thursday lecture, Mr. Redbank taught his people in his mild and loving way.

On the first Monday of every month, the Goose Common was cleared of its geese and the trainband trained.

To every man—rich or poor, white or red, freeman, commoner, or bonded servant—Mr. Parre gave justice at Town Court.

Bastard after bastard (it was sadly feared) did that comical she whom Tom Pigge called “wife” bear, in the Pigge-sty over beyond the Sheep Walks, and bury in the graveyard. Nor were the nicer women barren.

Once there had been one stone only in the graveyard beside the meeting-house. Here lay Mr. Redbank’s wife, who had died the first winter. Now, gravestone stood shoulder to gravestone. That grandmother whom Orde, the taverner, had been so brash as to bring out with him into the wilderness. The man who had fallen from the meeting-house roof as the Drummer’s Walk had been set. The bonded boy who had run away from his master and died in Cat Den Swamp.

Mr. Parre’s three sons. And the year cut upon their stone was 1641. This was the year of the throat distemper which had slain many of the children of Canaan.

An old woman who came from God knew where and had died a snowy night on the meeting-house steps. The woman who had gone mad and slain her husband with an axe and was hanged in Boston. Considerately, the Canaanites brought back her body. She was buried far from the others.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fenton Parre, consort to Mr. Jude Parre (1644). For four miserable and silent years had she lived at Paradise, buried three sons, and borne two more.

Then the graves of women who had died because they were too tired to live, and everywhere the graves of children.

All summer long at break of day the horn of the town herd bade children run to barn and byre and turn loose the cows. At nightfall, well fed upon the Great Commons, they were returned to the owners for milking. And the sheep were cared for by town shepherds, over upon the Sheep Walks. For the swine there was a hog-reeve—and more trouble did these vexatious creatures make than any other animal. In vain the town voted they be yoked and ringed. It seemed there was no controlling pigs.

The corn, the wheat, and the barley, oats and rye—they grew up green and milky, to fall before the reapers' scythes, to be threshed by flails on barn floors, to be ground to meal between the granite stones of the Blue mill.

The sound of flails, the breaking of flax, the thump of looms, the hum of spinning-wheels, the lowing of cattle, the songs of shepherds, the smell of wood smoke and manure, the sourness of malt-house, and the mouse in the malt. Bulls who locked horns and fought, girls who met their men under the dropping petals of shad-bush and wild cherry, the old woman who dozed in the sun, the duck leading her ducklings to water, the Indians who drank, and the good Indians. The dirty beards of goats and their leery eyes, the gold straw on new-thatched barns, the butchering of swine and the smell of offal, the lambs in June and maple sap dripping in sap buckets in February. The young wife struggling for the fourth day upon her bearing-stool, and the old man who died in his sleep under a flaming October maple, the poplars shaking gold coins against a blue September sky, and white oxen ploughing the muddy fields of March. The dead who lie in their graves. The quick

sleeping sometimes four to the bed, and the generations unborn and unbegotten in the loins of the men and the warm bodies of the women. Out of many things came Canaan, and all was well ordered—from the mouse in the malt-house to the brass-crowned clock ticking upon the walls of Paradise.



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I

FOR twenty-two years Paradise had sat upon its seemly site. The unpainted clapboards had aged to black. Beneath peaked roofs its tiny windows peered this way and that. Its back was turned contemptuously to the village. Its frowning face was to the river. A watchful, forbidding house it was. Forever would it guard its own within and hold the outside world in abeyance.

Jude Parre was now a man of sixty-eight. His beard was still sharp and dark, his eyes bright as a bear's, his smile and temper quick. In Canaan he had found himself as never he had in London or Padua, Hamburg or Leyden, and he had prospered. True, three sons, and two wives had he buried in the burial-ground beside the meeting-house, but Elizabeth had given him a brace of Canaan-born sons before she died, and Fidelia, the servant he never should have married, had left him three little girls. Five children are enough, he thought, to satisfy a white man and not enough to make the Tawnies giggle. On the whole, life had gone well with him at Paradise. Now-a-days he had more leisure for his Greek and Latin books and the flute which he played with more heart than accuracy. Parson Redbank had brought a viol da gamba with him, and Tom Pigge had a fiddle. The two foremost citizens of Canaan and the village reprobate often got together over their music.

A good life, he thought (taking his flute from his pocket), but it had its faults. Those three little girls, for instance. They should have been his grand-daughters. The widowed state is a lonely one. But lonely had he been in marriage. Now-a-days he sat by himself at the head of the table-board, not as formerly, with a wife beside him. Now he lay down alone in the great canopied bed in the West Chamber. But little joy

had he found in either wife. One had loved him—and the other he had loved. And (he began fingering upon his flute) in no way had love worked out in his life as happily as it did in Mr. Hilton's songs. He heard a dull roar from a cow's horn blown from the kitchen door-step. Noon time, and the farm servants called in for dinner.

His able female servant, Goodwife Goad, interrupted his thoughts.

"Master," she said, "with your permission . . ." And a twelve-foot table-board was heaved up on its trestles, missing the gentleman's flute by an inch or two. A blue board-cloth was spread upon the board, and stools and forms were drawn up on either side. The silver standing salt with a linen cloth upon it was set before him. This salt marked the high end of the table, where the gentry sat, from the low end, which, in old-fashioned manner, was reserved for the humbler members of his "family."

In Old England every man would have known from birth which end of the table was suitable to his estate. In the new land were new problems. Goody Goad never knew where to set the pagans. Her master had told her that any sons of the dead Sagamore of Swamp Town were to be placed next himself, and lesser of their neighbours among the servants. This was simple. But what of stranger Indians? Sachems, he had said, with himself. Netops and such, below. But how was a homely workwoman from Lincolnshire to know a sachem when she saw one, if all he had on was a dirty pair of Indian drawers?

Even white guests brought problems that never would have arisen across the seas. A shuffling and rearrangement of ancient patterns had begun in the new world. Their nearest neighbours, the Blues, for instance. Miller Blue, like Mr. Parre, had been

one of the original petitioners. Again and again these two had served upon the same Board of Selected Men. Yet one was a miller and the other a gentleman. Never in the Old World would this great difference be forgotten. Here it was not forgotten, but set aside a little. The miller and his wife, when they stopped for victuals, sat with the family. But two of his sons and his only daughter often worked at Paradise for daily wage. Goody Goad had told Mr. Parre she could not raise them above other servants. It was the low end of the table for them.

Goody Goad came in to the hall from the kitchen, carrying a fifteen-pound venison pastry. She plumped it down on the narrow board and stood for a moment, wiping back with a thick red arm most of the white hair which streamed from under her coif. She could not wipe it all back. She had an unmistakable, but rather likeable, small white moustache.

"Milk, Salome Blue," she was calling into the kitchen. "Bessie Thirst, you lazy slut, take your fingers out of your mouth and bring in the journey cakes. Ale and cider from the cellar. Fill up tankards and jacks!"

The gravy was bubbling up through the flaky brown crust of the venison pie. Its savour filled the hall. And carrots cooked with mint, and apples roasted with honey! The steaming yellow journey cakes gave off that scent—so familiar to New Englishmen—of baked Indian meal. It was enough to make the mouth water!

Mr. Parre, seeing all present and standing with bowed heads, started to get out of his panelled great-chair to ask the blessing. Goody Goad's voice rang out. "Jazan Parre, have you the audacity to sit down betwixt your two sisters—dressed like little ladies, if ever I saw little ladies—looking like that? If you prefer to be a farm servant and do haying, you can

sit down amongst them. We'll have no smocked plough-boys eating with gentry!"

That morning the women of the household had been powdering beef, and the children of Mr. Parre were supposed to help in any work that was going forward. Jazan had perversely refused the tedious work at the powdering-trough, which, like so much of the women's work, had an evil smell to it. Wool-washing, soap-boiling, candle-making. They all offended her delicate nose. She had told the Goodwife that she preferred to help the men cut and make the rowen. "That is no fit work for a petticoat," the old woman had snapped. Jazan had said that she would wear no petticoat. She had found in the loft a pair of coarse tongs small enough for her legs, and a sky-blue smock-frock, such as the farm-hands commonly wore. Thus dressed, she had been both busy and happy making the sweet-smelling hay. She did not argue now that she was to be punished by banishment to the low end of the table. It was as if, young as she was, she knew that such argument would be rude.

At last Mr. Parre had said his simple "God-bless-our-meat-amen," and with a horn spoon broke the crust of the tantalizing venison pie. There were no forks—but a spoon, a knife, and a bit of baker's bread did well enough. For each person there was a trencher of poplar wood, but at the head of the table spoons were of pewter, at the low end of laurel. And the gentry had a napkin apiece, but for lesser folk, smock-frocks and aprons, leathern breeches, and even one's own mouth or the backs of the circling, begging dogs sufficed.

Jazan was with the lesser folk. Humbly, and a little thoughtfully, she licked her fingers. Her dark eyes had a sweet and distant look, as though she still thought of the fragrant hay. Instead she was thinking of Bessie Thirst. Anyone who sat beside her would know she had been packing barrels with salt

beef that morning, and none could fail to guess that the week before she had been boiling soap.

All hands, be they coarse or gentle, red or white, went into the same pies, stews, hotchpotches, or puddings. All lips were pressed to the same tankards of pewter and the leathern jacks of ale, cider, or milk, as these stately vessels passed from hand to hand. The greatest difference between the high and the low end was that servants and such were supposed to eat as quickly as might be, not speak unless spoken to, and get back to their labour. The gentlefolk, especially if guests of rank were present, often loitered long and talked freely. This decent decorum was always kept unless Jude Parre himself upset it. But some days he would fling his remarks the whole length of the table. He would order a stupid Blue boy to elucidate to him the meaning of Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes, beg the shrinking Salome Blue to sing to him the song he had heard her lilting at her work.

As soon as the gentleman had stayed his appetite he pushed back his trencher in the slightly boorish way he had, glanced about him with his sharp eyes, pointed his beard to left and right, and roared a joke at Bessie Thirst—who was not an entirely admirable servant. Goody Goad hated to see her encouraged in her saucy ways. The old woman shook her head. When the Judge was in these moods, much more food was eaten and liquor drunk than on other days, but worst of all, time (God's most precious gift to man) was scandalously wasted.

There was no connection between these merry moods of her master and any outside event. Only the night before, his second son, Christopher, had arrived suddenly from Harvard. He had quarrelled with the Overseers and been sent home to cool his heels for a little. 'Twas enough to sadden some fathers'

hearts for a week of Sundays, but Mr. Parre, unperturbed, was laughing boisterously at his own pun over Bessie Thirst's name. Bessie was over-fond of her liquor.

"Hagar, darling," craved the Goodwife of the yellow-haired mite beside her, "can't you try to eat a bit of the venison? It's so good, deary-darling."

"It gripes me, Goody." The pretty, rickety little thing crawled into the old servant's lap. She was the youngest of Mr. Parre's children but too old—if not too big—for laps. She was ten. Goody Goad pressed her face against the gossamer aureole of the child's hair. She had been something of a mother to all three of the motherless girls—but sickly little Hagar had been her costling.

Now there was a lull in the table-talk. The Goodwife saw her chance of getting her women to work before the Judge could take out his flute and start a round, as he often did in such moods. Harvest had begun, and there was much to be done. She gestured at the open kitchen door with her untidy white head. Bessie pretended not to see, but Salome Blue, a most biddable creature, immediately stood up and stepped back over the form she had sat upon.

"Salome," said Mr. Parre, "now you are up, girl, fetch out my silver cup and fill it with malmsey. There's to be a drink all round today in honour of Christopher's arrival. We'll drink to his speedy return to Harvard." For the first time during the meal he turned to his two sons, who sat upon his left hand and had both been silent. "I've read President Chauncey's letter, Kit," he said. "'Tis nothing more than some confession of faith that you must sign, and back you start tomorrow morning. Wouldn't you rather sign anything than blister further in the hay-fields of Paradise?"

Christopher's thin, brownish skin had burned to scarlet with

the morning's work. He answered in an obviously controlled voice.

"Sir, I must talk to you further upon this matter. But not now, sir."

"And why not now? I was taught there is no such time as the present. So we'll drink to your health—and speedy return to Harvard."

Christopher had the sensitive nose of the dead Elizabeth, but hers had been long and pointed. His ended in a flippant tip-tilt. The maturity of his eighteen years had obliterated the dimples of his childhood. Now they were only eddies. In time they would be lines. These eddies came and went, as he set his light jaw. The sensitive nose stiffened.

Fenton, the black, casual elder brother, reaching out for a scrap of venison on his trencher, secretly nudged his brother's shoulder. Do not answer him, said the nudge. But Christopher, who a few years before had obeyed every word and nudge of his brother, now had outgrown such control. His head went up and his brown eyes flashed.

"Father, I'll tell you now. I will never sign that paper."

"What will you do, then? You've never had interest in becoming a farmer. You will not trade the Indians for furs like Fenton. What then, Christopher? What?"

"I'll study by myself. I have my books."

"I doubt if you have the mind for books. I doubt your mind is well hinged."

This boy had argued much with his father in the past, and Christopher could neither argue courteously nor refrain from argument. With difficulty he now kept silent. Fenton, too, was silent, but he seemed at ease and relaxed. So much more independent and ill-behaved than Kit, he never let himself be drawn out but did as he pleased and said nothing. He had

the implacable air of a man who can win in any fight, be it physical or mental.

As they sat side by side, they seemed more like each other and less like their father than they actually were. They were taller than he and better made than ever he had been. Especially about Fenton was an air of effortless power, unlike the nervous energy of the old man. But all three had energy. The constant movements of their father's head and hands, the vehemence of his speech, his throat-clearing, the way he drummed upon the table-board, had had, during the years, its opposite effect upon his two sons. They never hawked, drummed, or displayed their palms. Everything they did was done quietly. But Christopher had his father's scholarly mind and unaccountable bursts of temper. Fenton was aquiline of feature and had mottled, moody, dark eyes. In profile he resembled his father and his grandfather too, and his great-grandfather as well. But in England these Parre faces had been crooked faces—one eyebrow higher than the other, the smile going off to left or right. In the New World, this ancient pattern had smoothed out. Often, on looking at Fenton, Mr. Parre had thought him un-English. Yonder Fenton, he would say to himself, I don't know whether he was created by God or the Devil, the wolves or the Indians, and take no credit to himself that he had fathered such magnificence. Yet at heart, Fenton, wayward, bold and intelligent, cautious and violent, was not unlike the young scholar Jude Parre himself had once been.

Salome came in from the kitchen, flushed and, in her own rather wooden way, pretty. She had filled the cup too full. She was always in such a hurry she filled things too full, and now she was in terror lest one drop of the costly Grecian wine

be spilt. After it got by ship to Boston, it had to be carried over twenty miles to Canaan by pack-horse.

Mr. Parre stood up, and the others stood as well. "To the return of my son, Christopher," he said, drank and bowed to the troublesome boy, then passed the heavy cup to Agnes, his eldest girl, who stood, tall and stately, upon his right hand. Fenton laughed, showing teeth as coarse and strong as a wolf's. Only he had noticed how astute his father had been in wording the toast. For did they drink to Kit's return to Paradise or speedy return to Harvard?

Agnes dropped her eyes and drank silently. She was smooth, blond, beautiful. Her stature and dignity made her look nearer twenty than her actual fifteen years. She had read a book of etiquette lately and knew that neither she nor her younger sisters were well brought up. In well-ordered households young maids did not speak out boldly, and their manners were modest. Mr. Parre had taught his daughters, as well as his sons, to look the world square in the face and speak their minds honestly. Agnes now knew better.

Hagar pertly refused to drink. "If Kit is bad, why should I, Papa?" The Goodwife drank, wiping her moustache on her arm. Then Salome. And Bessie Thirst looked ready to drain the cup. So it came to Jazan.

The girl flung back her black hair. She had been irritated, both by Agnes's finicky manner and Hagar's pertness. She stood, holding the cup in both hands, and addressed her half-brother. "I'd drink six cups of malmsey to you, Christopher, if I had them," she said. She had a fine air about her—bold, innocent, and outspoken.

So at last the cup had made its rounds. Now the servants were thanking their master, and ready to start to work. Goody Goad's stout heart sank at Mr. Parre's next words. He said

his steward, Goodman Goad, and the Goodwife should sit a little longer, and the three children of Neighbour Blue as well. There was still some wine left in the huge cup.

Salome twisted her hands. "Sir," she said, "I'm in the middle of packing a barrel of the powdered beef."

"Your work will keep. You, especially, must stay. For are you not foster-sister to my Kit?"

The girl sat, uncomfortable, on the edge of a form. She was always uncomfortable with the Judge. But she tried to speak up to him in the open manner she knew he liked.

"'Tis an honour I hardly deserve credit of, sir. 'Twas that my mother happened to be the only nursing woman in Canaan when Christopher was born and I was born and his mother died. And yet," the timid girl blushed, "I know my mother overcharged you. Even if she did have . . . did have . . . I forget the word—"

"A monopoly on the commodity, my dear!"

"That's it. She charged too much. And I've often said to Goody that I hope, by working just a little harder than is expected of me, to make up my mother's overcharge to you for milk which should by rights have been free charity. Is it true, sir, that the squaw who nursed Fenton took never a penny?"

"Never so much as a piece of red cloth. But *she* thought Fenton was a devil."

"Oh, Mother never felt that way about Kit. She said he was prettier than any of her own eight sons. And the hungriest baby she ever saw."

Christopher looked embarrassed. He never liked to be reminded that he owed his life to the mercy (or cupidity) of that lean she-wolf of a Goody Blue. And how tediously Salome

went on about it! Fenton was proud of the Indian milk he had drunk.

Still Salome wanted to go. "Harvest is upon us, sir," she said, "and as Goody said this morning, to refuse to work to one's uttermost at harvest time . . ."

"Ah, that reminds me, Goody. Now that corn harvest begins soon enough, I doubt if you will object to another serving-wench in your kitchen? Your husband tells me we will often have ten farm servants to feed for two months now. There'll be enough work to keep a miss out of trouble?"

The Goodwife pursed her lips. Again and again Mr. Parre had taken in the most unlikely folk, out of kindness. Like that hideous, creaking, old pauper woman a few years before. Fancy Dear, her name had been. He said she could work enough for her keep and he'd be damned if he'd send her back to Sudbury! It had taken the hag two years to die.

"Master," she said, "there are some for whom there's never enough work to keep out of mischief. And who is it this time? I suppose she is eighty-six and has a sore in her side?" Thus she reminded him of Fancy Dear.

Salome giggled.

"This girl I speak of has been reported to me as Judge, but she seems a likely maid to me. She's but a year older than my Jazan. I believe if she were taken away from her family she might work out well enough. I'd rather give her honest labour than a whipping. Are you ready to help?"

"How can I say, sir, unless I know who she be?"

"None other than Tom Pigge's oldest living child. The one they call Johnny Pigge. I told her father to send her around to me this noon time."

"Johnny Pigge! Well, sir!"

Instantly, there was an ominous silence. Mr. Parre did not

feel it, but Christopher did. He looked about, questioning the averted faces. Something had happened concerning Johnny Pigge in his absence. He glanced sidewise at his brother. Fenton was not embarrassed. He said to Paul Blue, "I'm going over beaver pelts this afternoon, Paul. Tomorrow I'll take a pack-train to Boston."

The Judge went on. "As you know, this little wench is badly spoken of. Only fourteen, yet her reputation for honesty and chastity is not of the best—yet no proof offered of the latter complaint."

"And such a one you would take into your own family, with your boys grown men now, and your young maids to think about? She should be whipped out of town."

"Well, 'tis I who decide."

It seemed an incredible thing to the smart gossip that Mr. Parre did not know that his own son's name—that Fenton, yonder—had been connected with Johnny's. She glanced nervously at the young man. He was slowly gulping ale. There was no embarrassment in his gulping, only that heedlessness he had always had.

Again silence. Salome's presence made it worse. For three years Fenton Parre had been dallying and tarrying with this young neighbour, and it had at last seemed to Mr. Parre that the Goodwife Blue was right. Marriage should follow. Women were not lightly courted in the New England. The law saw to that.

Salome was too agitated to keep silent. She burst out.

"Oh, sir, I think it would show true Christian charity. And poor Johnny, she has never been properly taught in housewifery. I'm sure that we—that Goody Goad . . . that . . . that—" Her voice rang out, and she was frightened at the

sound. Then she upset an empty milk tankard. "I don't know what I'm saying, I talk too much—I . . . I . . ."

Mr. Parre laughed. He had not noticed the tension about him. "Then you are like me, Salome. Christopher tells me I talk too much. Why, child! What are you crying about? What if you did upset a milk flagon? There wasn't any milk in it. Salome—wait!" Salome had burst into tears and flung out of the hall into the kitchen. "Now where in the devil's name has *she* flown off to? What might I have said to upset her so? Jesu! What a touchy wench! Fenton, I can make the miss cry but I doubt if I can comfort her. Get you then after her."

"I'll finish my ale first, sir."

"Goody, what might I have said to hurt the touchy young thing? Come, speak plainly."

The Goodwife swelled like a brooding hen and stared at her master's eldest son. "Sir, I cannot."

Fenton set down the silver-rimmed leather jack, pushed aside his trencher, put his knife back in its sheath at his belt. He got to his feet in the sluggish way he often moved about a house. In the woods, he was quick as a catamount. "Now I will do as you bid me. And with *me* gone, the Goodwife will find her tongue fast enough."

He stood with his dark head close to the smoky rafters, for he was as tall as a man might be and yet fit into a house. As tall as a room was high, and as broad in the shoulder as a door was wide. There was a certain unconscious insolence about his manner and the set of his fine body. He defied everybody—from his father in the panelled great-chair at the head of the table to sickly little Hagar, once more in Goody's lap. Let them say about him anything they wished. He would

not care. As soon as he was in the kitchen and the door behind him closed, the sobbing Salome was in his arms.

The Goodwife found her tongue. "Now then. Know this, Master. There's a fair scandal amongst us, and nobody told you because you have so often said you cared not for idle gossip. Well, you can shut the door now—after the horse is stolen."

"But who's been stealing horses?"

"No one. But everyone in Canaan, except yourself only, knows that your Fenton meets Johnny—and not always by daylight. Even Hagar . . ."

"Yes, Papa. I've seen 'em a-walking the woods together."

"Yes, indeed," murmured the Goodwife, brushing back the golden curls from the round, hot little forehead, "and he's been courting Salome Blue for many a year now—in his odd moments, when he has nothing better to do. How he comports himself with the Indians, when he is gone away amongst them for five months at a time, God only knows."

"Papa, Goody says that a-walking in the woods may lead to many things."

"Yes, deary-darling. And so often it does."

Mr. Parre looked wearily at the precocious little thing in the old woman's lap. A very angel she did look. And what a sharp eye for evil! "Goodwife," he said, "if you cannot learn that brat when to keep her mouth shut, I'll duck her in the horse-trough." He turned to the two big callow Blue boys, sitting in blushing silence, side by side. Their white lashes were lowered over pale eyes. "Paul and Dick Blue, what do you know of this matter? Although the banns have not been read, and may not be for some time, Salome and Fenton are looked upon as betrothed, and both families have agreed to the alliance. Never would I have picked Salome for my son, but he

picked her for himself. And a man must stand by his choice. Before God, Salome is too good a maid to share a man with that little pig from Pigge-sty. Is there any truth in Goody Goad's suggestion?"

The Blues were strong and physically fearless. Many times had they gone north with Fenton Parre, trading with the Indians, but when the Judge swooped down on them like this they had not a word to say. Mr. Parre saw by their red, averted faces that never would they betray Fenton, even in a matter touching their sister's honour. Never betray him by word—but their stupid faces betrayed him! Mr. Parre's eyes flashed about the table. He was furious with his fine Fenton. Salome had been bad enough. Now he was slightly revolted that son of his could find the little Pigge slut even desirable. Was he no better than a stallion to whom all mares look alike? He thought of his son's shoulders. He was ashamed that he could use his proud self so wastefully. A grown man, wasn't he? Twenty-one, wasn't he? Let him drink his own sour ale. He had brewed it!

Goody Goad said cheerfully, "I suppose, by rights, he probably should be forced to marry her. . . ."

"Oh! silence. Let there be no talking of marrying! No matter what may have passed between them. And all this is gossip only."

"Would you rather have a bastard hanged about your son's neck?"

"Better a hundred bastards! And what's wrong with bastards? William the Norman—he was one, and he was a doughty knight. I may be one myself, I don't know. God knows, and my mother is dead." He made a speech on bastardry. A eulogy, almost.

When he came to the end of his address, it seemed that he

had reached some conclusion in his quick, hidden mind. "I will attend to this matter," he promised the Goodwife. "Johnny shall be married off to somebody's indentured servant. The Selected Men will give them a little land. Fourteen is overyoung for marriage, but so is it for harlotry—if that's what she has been about. Tom Pigge is a scamp. Has always been one and always will be. No wonder his girls take to evil ways. Nothing has been proven against Johnny . . . or anybody else. But I do see one thing clearly. 'Tis time Johnny had a husband. Or else the whole litter be ordered to move on out of Canaan. Never has Tom been admitted to our township, even as a commoner—but lived on in sufferance only. Partly because he's a good carpenter—when sober. Partly, I do admit, that he can play upon the fiddle." He saw Jazan staring at him. "Well, child," he said to her, "you are always hanging about Fenton when he's home. What have you to say of this matter? Hagar has repeated what *she*—a house pet—has seen." A look of bland and preposterous innocence came over the young girl's face. So, thought her father, Jazan has known for a long time—and 'tis true. There's never face so secretive as the bland and open face. And no more than the Blue boys, will Jazan betray Fenton.

"I like Johnny, sir," she said at last.

"I cannot say I admire your taste. Goodwife, this much I promise you. When Johnny comes she shall be sent home again—by way of the parsonage. Mr. Redbank is fitter to deal with such matters than I. I like too well to make fine speeches."

"Indeed you do, sir."

"And when I'm done, I look into their faces and see they have not taken in one word."

"'Tis not the fault of the words, master. 'Tis the thickness of the ears. They are always notable speeches."

The front door was heard to open, and into the great hall of Paradise stalked Johnny Pigge. This front entrance was used but little, except on the days Mr. Parre held court in his own house or the Governor and such rode out to confer with him. That Johnny should come in by the front door seemed the greatest impudence. She had indeed gone around first to the kitchen, but seeing Fenton with Salome in his arms had, with a certain kindness, not wished to intrude upon them.

"Well," said the Goodwife, "I heard the front door open and I thought a great lady had come to dine with us." She stared at the miserable and yet merry child before her. Her sarcasm was not lost on Agnes. Being a great stickler for rank, this joke made her laugh.

"Well, zor, um cum." So the rough Cornish dialect sounded.

"What, Mistress Pigge—can't you speak anything but Cornish English?"

"Nor, zor."

"I'd liefer you learned a prettier speech. Your parents were born in Cornwall. It is different for them, but you were born here in Canaan. And Lincolnshire is our usage—is it not, Goodwife?" And he bowed formally to the servant-woman, who, like so many of the settlers, had come from the fen-lands, bringing with her the nasal twang and close vowels of her own shire. This was a way of speech very unlike Mr. Parre's warmer tones. Already it was beginning to be accepted as the dialect for the New England.

Johnny looked with kind tolerance at the old Judge. She had an ugly little mug, squashed together as though one hand had been placed under her jutting jaw and another on her crown. She was always in rags. And underclothes she had none,

as a rent in her dirty wadmal skirt proved. Her legs were bare and her black hair tousled.

Johnny carried her poverty with bravado, and her now broad grin was disarming. With the cunning of a born harlot, she knew whom to fear. She understood Jude Parre as well as if she knew in what roistering and unlovely company he had spent many of his student hours.

He said: "Yesterday I told your father that you were to come here today and discuss with me and Goodwife Goad the wisdom of your biding here amongst us and learning to be a proper serving-wench. Since then I have heard things of you, Johnny, which make a different course seem wiser. There are always more men than women coming out to the Bay Colony. I think it is time you wed and settled down."

"I zum be too poor a wench. No man would wed me."

"The town will help you a little and find a proper young yokel."

"Nor zanke, zor. I'd liefer not."

"Johnny, I'm not asking you what you liefer had, or liefer hadn't. If you and your family are to bide on here at Canaan you have no choice but do as I say. I have four times been petitioned by very respectable townsmen to warn you all out of Canaan. If we send you out, do you think any other town would be as lenient as we have been? I have been reprov'd again and again as over-lenient to ill-doers."

"Ma pa has sat in stocks in St. Ives and at Penzance in the Old World, and in Ipswich, Sudbury, and Boston, here. He says no plaze is zo good as here."

"Well, 'tis gratifying that our stocks are comfortable enough to win the approval of an expert sitter. But the village is getting tired of you all."

"Ma pa doze get drunk—and if it's Mrs. Hurlingheart's old gander you are talking about, 'twus my ma as stole it."

"Your mother has had her whipping. I have nothing more to say of the gander. But I believe it will be best for us all if you let me pick out a young redemptioner for you. The town will give you a little land from off the Sheep Walks—and Goody, haven't we a few odd ends about Paradise she might have for her hearth? An old iron pot and a pair of fire-dogs?"

"We have an extra pair of dogs, master, but I was saving those against that time Salome is married."

Jazan broke in, "Johnny, I have a pair of linen sheets. It is all I have in my chest, as yet. You can have them."

Johnny turned her ugly snout at the girl, so oddly dressed today in work-boy's clothes. A look of appreciation, almost of affection, came into her eyes.

"Thee's a good child, Jazan darling. But I can get my own sheets when the time comes."

"But Goody," exclaimed Jazan, gesturing almost like her father with her slender hands, "what can we give her that she will accept?" Jazan's defence angered the woman.

"That baggage—that! A piece of my mind for a low-lived, dirty slut. Why, to think I would see the day when marriage presents were offered to such a one. She ought to be run out of this town with whips. Whips—do you hear me, Johnny? If I were Judge, I'd order you skinned alive. I'd hang up the skin . . ."

"The law would not sanction you," Mr. Parre interposed good-naturedly.

". . . and out of that tough hide of yours, I'd make a pair of shoes for Salome Blue to wear."

You can never guess what will rile a much abused person. That old joke about her name. It had often driven her father—

"the old boar"—to his pots. And she had heard her mother say that as long as their home was called a "sty" she never could care to keep it clean. These puns did not bother Johnny, but the thought that her skin was to be presented to Salome Blue for shoes, unlikely as it was, threw her into a rage.

The first few mouthfuls came out in pure Cornish, which no one could understand. Then she went on in what she considered English. There was a zooming of many "z's," a great mixture of her's and she's, as she tried to make Goody Goad realize that out of *her* skin you could make a breast-plate to wear to war. Her head, stuck on a pole, would frighten the Indians . . . turn them to stone. Mr. Parre murmured to Christopher, "She's read Ovid. That's the story of Medusa." Next, she began on Salome Blue, whom she decided had been telling lies about her because she was jealous of Fenton. She did not say "Mr." Fenton, as would have been suitable.

"She thinks he'll wed with her? Naw, never!" And with that she flounced out of the hall, and again they heard the heavy front door close.

2

JOHNNY stood, a forlorn small figure. Before her were low barns, thatched with golden straw, set to form three sides of a rustic court-yard. The horse-trough, burned from a chestnut log, as the Indians had taught the white men, stood in the midst thereof. It was here the men commonly washed after work. One of Fenton's hunting-dogs sprawled in the sun. He started to get up, but recognizing Johnny (with what seemed to the girl to be a wicked leer) he scratched himself and lay down again.

The doves walked the golden roofs, saying "coo coo coo-ker coo." There were no cows about, for all were off with the town

herdsman. Only an old white brood-mare, whose name the girl knew was Breeze. This was the Judge's favourite mount. He'd rather ride Breeze, even with a silly foal running at her heels, than any other horse. Once her maternity had overtaken her at the county seat of Cambridge, and Mr. Parre had come home with a foal, although he had started out with none. Breeze switched her white tail, utterly indifferent to the young son stalking about her.

Chickens, hens and ducks, a few goats, one fine, hurrying tabby cat, a tame turkey or two. Johnny turned her back on this bucolic scene. She might hunt about the currant bushes and find an egg, but all things considered, today was not the day. Her father's disappointment that his eldest daughter had proven not to "suit" at Paradise must be mitigated by a small present.

In all directions from Paradise was a sprinkling of lesser buildings. Fenton's warehouse, where he stored furs. Chicken coops, beehives of basketry, the malt-house, for Paradise brewed its own light and heady ale. Palings enclosing calf pastures, and pungent herb gardens. A little roof built over the well. She saw nothing here that suggested a small, safe present for her disappointed family. So she decided to go home by way of the mill. She would sweep up the mill floor and bring home the chaff. This privilege was never denied to the very poor. She stepped boldly forth to the bank of the river. Along it ran a foot-path edged by willows. At one end of it was Swamp Town and the Indians, at the other the Blue mill. And t'other side of the river was crabbed old Founder's House where, for as long as Johnny could remember, Goodman and Goodwife Goad had lived.

Slowly she paced the half mile to the mill. She heard the

roar of the race, the clacking of the wooden machinery. Mill and house were under the one roof, and the whole built of stone. In front, she saw the miller in his floury white smock—talking with Deacon Noah Bailey, who drove a yoke of plump Devon oxen. And Goodwife Blue stood beside her husband, watching out that no Bailey cheated him on the price of grinding—as they had cheated him many times before. All the Blue children, except only the three that day working at Paradise, stood gaping at the oxen, the deacon, and their parents. Johnny thought that not only the mill, but the house as well, was empty. She peered in through a kitchen window, and laughed silently at what she saw. Seated upon the floor, in an attitude of complete dejection, was a boy of her own age. He was busy sewing. He had tawny hair, cropped closely to the skull, as a symbol of his servitude. This was Gervase, the miller's apprentice. Supposedly, he was being taught the arts and cunning of the miller's trade, but there were enough sons for that, and few women's hands at the mill. Goody Blue hired Salome out by the day, and made a kitchen-wench out of her husband's apprentice. So Gervase, called Blue, sat soberly on the floor and sewed. Johnny exulted that nobody had caught *her*—never would she be a "proper serving-woman," even if Gervase was. She went to the mill entrance. The spilt flour on the floor felt fine as silk to her bare toes. She took up a handful of corn meal, chewed it, and spat it out; looked about her for an empty sack and found one; looked about for a broom to sweep up the floor—and so looked out the window. There, close beside the race, she saw two new sheets—spread with sour milk and set out to bleach in the sun. She knew Salome had woven them.

Salome's industry was a marvel among the womenfolk. No one span and wove so well or so unceasingly. For two years

now she had been making those things she would need as Fenton's wife. Johnny's eye brightened. She walked down to the race, stuffed the sheets in her sack, and started to leave. Then she met the miller.

"Well, Johnny?"

"Zor, I did but take the sweepings from the floor. The sack I'll fetch back to you next day."

Swinging her square little hips, the sack upon her back, Johnny waddled off towards her sty, back of the Sheep Walks.

3

ON the first Tuesday after the second Thursday of each month, Mr. Parre held town court in the hall at Paradise. Only the most paltry of local affairs came to this court, and he often acted more as adviser than judge.

It was golden October, and he sat before a table with a red turkey carpet on it. His back was to the gigantic hearth where a slow fire burned all day. Beside him sat the minister, in black Geneva gown. He was a man of similar age to Mr. Parre, and they had been fellows together once, at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Parson Redbank had coarse, iron-grey curls and a lumpy red face. Between them, they ran Canaan much to their own liking, but not always to the satisfaction of others. The clerk sat apart a little. The Constable stood stiffly by, in steel cap and corslet, a sword upon his hip, a pike in his hands. It was difficult, under the steel cap, to recognize the familiar face of the town smith. Once he had worn this same gear at Marston Moor, for he was an old Ironsides of Oliver Cromwell's.

The morning showed a simple docket. A few cases of vagrancy, an impudent apprentice, a man who had courted a

wench without asking her father's consent. Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, costly raiment worn by a woman whose husband had too little estate. These were little things, and Mr. Parre treated them as little things. But in the afternoon there were to be three cases Mr. Parre liked not.

The hall was always crowded on Court Day by men, women, and children, all in their best clothes, their manners subdued to the occasion. The small dramas of the court were appreciated by a people who had neither playhouses, masques, or pageants to engage them. Although the fall day was chill, Mr. Parre had ordered the small casements to be opened, and these windows were filled with faces of those who were unable to find room for themselves in the hall.

"Our beloved people," Mr. Parre said in Latin to Parson Redbank, "may smell sweet to the Lord, but often they are too much for me." The Parson's face brightened, and he answered sonorously in Latin with such crude humour that Mr. Parre slapped his thigh, threw back his head, and laughed.

The noon-time recess was over. The barrel of ale, always rolled out into the yard for such occasions, had been almost emptied by the townsmen, who needed something to wash down the cold dinners they had brought with them. Some sixty people were now wedged into the "great" hall, which, after all—by English standards—was but a low, coarse room, of not much size. A homely room. Rich, brown wood, white-washed plaster walls. The scarlet of the turkey carpet on the table, considerable scarlet in the unglazed map of New England upon the wall. The orange ears of seed corn, hanging from the summer beam, and the orange of the small fire on the hearth. The metal shine of the two swords crossed above the mantel (his own and Fenton's). The glow of a hundred pounds of pewter, set upon the press. And the bright clothing

of the audience. The fair blue they got from indigo, the warm browns and yellows from red oak and hickory. As they wore their Sabbath raiment, many of the women had coifs, aprons, and cross-cloths of sheer-spun white lawn, and the men wore stiff-starched white collars over their kersey, shag, or leather jerkins. But mostly, as Mr. Parre looked about him, he saw eyes. All eyes were fastened respectfully upon him.

"I like not the three cases for this afternoon," he murmured to Mr. Redbank. "This matter of Johnny's stealing Salome's sheets and the releasing of Miller Blue's apprentice, and least of all the cursed matter of the town hogs eaten by the Indians' dogs. Ay, 'tis true! The Pigges should be warned out of town. But Tom Pigge . . . I like the fellow right well. If kings keep clowns to make them laugh, why should not Canaan have their Pigges? And now once more have I been petitioned to move them on. Well, it is *I* who decide." This was true, for the statutes of the Bay Colony gave great lee-way to the Judge in all matters. It was believed that in giving sentence it was more important to consider the criminal than the crime.

Mr. Parre picked up his copy of the "Body of Liberties," and idly turned the pages. The thirty offences punishable by death in England had here been reduced to ten only. And here a man might not beat his wife—even with a stick no bigger than his thumb, except he was attacked by her. He read, "No man shall exercise any Tyrannie or Crueltie towards any brute creature, which are usually kept for man's use. . . ." So far as he knew this was the first law ever enacted for the protection of man's dumb servants. It was not to be found in Common Law. But in spite of all the goodness and kindness of these laws, there was evil too. Religious intolerance. Once, when younger, he had fought for broader toleration. But now his time for fighting for great things was over. He would still

fight, but for small things only; and he meditated sadly on this change within himself, as the clerk read out the charge against "one Joanna Pigge" and the witnesses were raising right hands and swearing to tell the truth (God help them!). So he himself had changed, had he? Christopher would carry on the fight he had himself laid down—not if he could help it! Kit is like me. His skull is thin, and yet he will butt it against stone walls he cannot move. So did I at his age.

The case of the sheets progressed. Was almost over. He had listened to Paul Blue describing how he had found them in the Pigge sty. The sheets had been duly identified by Goody Blue as the very ones her Salome had woven. The Constable said that when he went to arrest Johnny she had promptly confessed. As though from a long way off, for he was thinking of other things, Mr. Parre heard Salome's own jerky tale of how she had made the sheets. She named the very field of flax and reminded him how fine flax was summer before last. Then, in her garrulous nervousness, she came out with the fact that she already had set by seventeen sheets and these two would bring the tally to nineteen, and when a maid had twenty she had enough to marry on.

A slight titter went over the hall and the Constable's pike ground on the sanded floor. For some reason everyone considered Salome, and her great forehandedness in marriage, laughable.

The squat Cornish girl, emboldened by the laugh which showed her that Salome was a figure of fun, stuck out her little snout.

"Her," she said, pointing at the blushing Salome, "made them sheets for your Fenton to lie so nice upon. Reckon she'll never need them. *He* won't marry with you, Salome."

Poor Salome quivered and hung her head. There was some-

thing touching in her confusion, in her consciousness that all were against her. Mr. Parre quietly corrected Johnny for her interruption and then went on speaking rapidly.

"I judge you, Joanna Pigge, guilty of the theft of a pair of fine linen sheets. For this, you shall be whipped. Constable, you shall give her five strokes next Thursday at the whipping-post before the meeting-house, and the time shall be one-half hour after the adjournment from Thursday lecture. And you, Constable, I bid you think not of her sex and take no heed whether her back be tender or horny, but lay on."

He pushed back the papers before him, in the same boorish way he would push back his trencher at meat, glanced at the brass-crowned clock up the wall before him, and asked for Thomas Pigge himself. Pigge had not come to court with his daughter.

"Johnny, you are to take this word to your father from me. If he and his family are still living in Canaan one month from this day, he will be driven out by force. We have had enough of him and his. Clerk Hurlingheart, draw up the papers for the Selected Men and myself to sign, and see that they are served with due ceremony on this Thomas Pigge."

Johnny, who had received the sentence to be flogged without a flicker, now realized that it was she who had brought this long-dreaded sentence of banishment upon them all. She flung herself on her knees before the Judge.

"Zor, zor . . . beat me to a jelly . . . kill me! But do not punish them, I beg ye! It was half in fun I stole Salome's sheets." But he would none of her, and Constable English pushed at her with his pike and got her up and away. Her raucous lamentations were heard growing fainter outside the house as she took the road home to tell her family.

And "Next, next," the Judge was calling to the clerk impatiently.

So he found himself looking into the noble Roman face of his neighbour Goodman Blue. The miller nodded his head heavily, as it was charged against him that his apprentice had not been properly cared for. Of his wife, lean and glowering in her corner, no word was said, although all knew that it was more her fault than his that Gervase, called Blue, was to be released from his master.

The tithingman testified he had not been properly taught. He did not know either the Ten Commandments or the Catechism, and could not read. Goody Blue snapped that he was too stupid to learn. A short, florid man, called "Colonel" Coffin, said the lad was overworked. He himself had been amazed at the sacks of grain the boy had carried over to his house on his back. It was work more suitable for ox than man.

Goody Goad testified that often she had so pitied his hunger and nakedness she had given him food and clothing from Paradise. The terms of the apprenticeship (signed by Miller Blue himself) were read out. The man had promised to keep the lad well, to have him taught as became a Christian, and to learn him all the arts and cunning of the miller's trade. But he had been taught nothing, folk testified, except to scour pots, spin and weave, tend babies, wash clothing, and carry heavy sacks.

The miller raised his head, which was so much nobler than himself. "Sir, it is true Gervase is a little thin. And I regret it if I overburdened him with sacks. The fact is I undertook this Gervase without due consultation with my wife, nor knowledge of what the Lord would vouchsafe me in children of my own, for I have eight sons and that's enough to teach milling to. And there is a dearth of women's hands about my

house. So (although a fault), it was but natural that my wife took the lad to be her serving-wench. Now that it is spoken of to me, I see it to be a great fault, for Gervase has learned but little with me that will fit him to man's estate." Then he begged the Court to look upon him mercifully, and to ask Gervase if ever he had been starved or beaten or abused. He himself would admit that he had not been properly taught.

Mr. Parre glanced about the jam of people.

"Now am I determined that Gervase, called Blue, is set free from his old master, William Blue. Clerk, draw up the papers for the miller to sign. Gervase, you are now free of your old master and, for the moment, have no new one. If you have any charge to make against your old master, *or your mistress*, now is your chance. Have you been beaten cruelly—burdened beyond endurance?"

Everyone in the room knew that this was true. They did not blame the miller, who was under his shrewish wife's thumb. Salome, who had often sickened to see the welts from her mother's lash on the boy's thin shoulders, turned her head away in shame. Mr. Parre had already decided that the woman should be stood for an hour on the horse-block before the meeting-house, a switch hung about her neck, a sack of meal upon her back, and a placard reading . . . how should he word it? I beat children? No, children often should be beaten. At the boy himself he had hardly glanced. Gervase interrupted his thoughts. Unexpectedly (for Mr. Parre had never seen servant who would not turn on his master if he had good warrant and protection) Gervase said, "No." Mr. Parre flashed his eyes at him. So the lad would not take the offered revenge, and what in God's name was the meaning of that?

"You must add 'sir' when speaking to men of my rank—

or, considering your humble station, to any man who carries the honourable title of Goodman." His voice was kind.

"No, sir."

"How old are you, my lad?"

"It is thought I am thirteen or fourteen. No one knows—sir. I was so little when my mother left me behind her in Boston."

"And you have no complaint to make against your mistress? You need not fear her whip."

"None, sir." The Judge fell to studying him. He had a fair, broad English face. The mouth was, in some way, a little wrong. Too hard-locked for his years. And not a word out of that tight young mouth against the Blues. He has a mind, then, above revenge. I like the lad right well. Mr. Parre addressed the crowd.

"Is there any among you who will learn this willing and good lad a proper trade, and all thing needful to a Christian—keep him until his eighteenth year and then—well equipped in cunning, send him forth into the world with a new suit of clothes and a pair of good shoes?"

There was a whispering between husbands and wives, but no answer.

"Goodman Orde, you are our taverner—will you take this boy, teach him to be tapster or butler, baker or brewer?"

"Sir, I have a green lad just signed for. But if you ask it of me . . ."

"Goodmen Bailey, there is but one son growing up on Baileys' Acres, and yet that is the greatest farm this side of Boston—barring Paradise only. Have you room for him? Make him an honest yeoman?"

In agitation the two brothers, Seth and Noah, whispered together. Deacon Noah was that strangest of things—a

bachelor. Mr. Parre disliked them both as purse-swollen, grasping, suspicious peasants. By their frugality and skill they had prospered prodigiously in the new settlement.

"Thur," said the Deacon, who lisped through toothlessness, "lath week Goody Blue told me the lad was mithchefus and lathy. We need none thuth at Baileyth' Acreth."

"I do not share that opinion of you, Gervase. All of us here at Paradise know how hard you do work and how little complain. Is there not one of my own household who will testify for this young neighbour of ours?" And he looked about for Goody Goad.

"I will, Father," said Jazan. She had sat all day beside her sisters, for their father thought it well for these young misses early to learn how punishment follows crime. But that one of them should dare to speak up amazed him. Now Jazan was on her feet. All eyes were fastened upon her . . . confused her. Her breath came hard. And her father was smiling superciliously at her. Her dark, staring beautiful eyes were full of dread. She knew he would make some joke, and everyone would laugh at her. Agnes was pulling at her skirt. "'Tis no time for you to speak up . . . sit down, you chit."

"Well, Miss," said the Judge (she did not feel he was her father), "what have *you* to say for yourself—or rather for this Gervase?" He knew Goody Goad, in her efforts to teach the girls charity, made them feed with their own hands poor and hungry folk who came to Paradise. It befitted their station as gentlewomen. He did not know that there was a bond between these two children of similar age—compassion on one side, adoration on the other—and a mute understanding on both. "Well, Miss; well, Miss." His nervous fingers tapped at the "Body of Liberties." "Did you get on your feet merely

to mouth at me? Don't stand there dumb as a mouse in a cheese."

"No. Why don't you take him to be your own apprentice—let him live here amongst us?"

"And learn him to be a judge?" The laugh that Jazan dreaded came. She lived through it. "Goodman Goad could teach him to farm. Gervase loves farming—he's told me so."

"Most of us love best the things we have never done." Another laugh greeted this judicial humour. Jazan did not mind this laugh, however. She had caught a flash of approval in her father's eye.

"And I'll teach him to write and read, and the Ten Commandments and the Shorter Catechism."

Mr. Redbank plucked at Mr. Parre's purple plush sleeve. The two men consulted in Latin. Then Mr. Parre said, "How does that suit you, Gervase called Blue?"

The boy's eyes, clean as a blue horizon and his only beauty, dropped. Ever since he could remember, the Parres had been beings from another world to him, and their Paradise a heaven upon earth. He could find no words for his thanks. His hands were like a puppy's paws, too big for his present growth, but a promise of what he could become. These broad hands locked and unlocked together.

"I will serve you forever, sir. You and your people. And Paradise, too."

"So be it—but until eighteen, only. Clerk Hurlingheart, draw up the papers. Goodman Goad, he is to live with you and the other male servants at Founder's. He shall tend no babies and scour no pots. Until he is a little fatter, give him double portion of all food, for the lad looks to me like a well-boned colt grown up on poor pasture. You promise me to grow, Gervase?" He was smiling now. The boy seriously

promised. "And every day, as soon as the candles are lit, you are to come to me and I will teach you sufficient book learning, for the Bay Colony wants no illiterate men, not even workingmen, and if I am away, Jazan will undertake you."

Jude Parre's long, dark fingers drummed the table. The next case involved too much money. He told the litigants whom to see at the county seat of Cambridge. As soon as they were dismissed, the clerk, a tired and innocuous little gentleman, began to read the charge of the white farmers against the Indians of Swamp Town. Among the witnesses the Judge heard his own son's names read out. They heard them too. Evidently they had been waiting in the kitchen, for now they sauntered into the hall.

They had not bothered to sit the day out and listen reverently to justice. They had not even changed their clothing, but came in just as they were dressed from the fields.

"Of course," thought the Judge, "it would be *my* sons who are on the wrong side. Backing the pagan Indians against the white men." But he felt a pride, an envy almost, of the two powerful young men who entered the hall of judgment, looking, among the carefully dressed villagers, like king's sons in disguise. With them came Totonic, Fenton's milk-brother and ally. Most of the Nipmucs were tall. Totonic was the smallest perfectly formed man Mr. Parre had ever seen. "King Pint Pot," he was called in contempt by the Canaanites. It was with him Fenton took his long trading trips to the north. Gay and gracious in his private life, the Indian was now dignified and immobile. For official business he had a lofty manner.

As Clerk Hurlingheart read how on such and such days the Indians and their dogs had killed such and such hogs and took the oaths of the witnesses, Mr. Parre studied his two

sons. Christopher he felt he could understand. There was much obstinacy and wrongness in this good boy, and all this revolt seemed concentrated in that flippant tilt to his nose. But Fenton. Sometimes, on his eldest son's face, he would catch an expression so "new," as to amaze him. It was as if the rich, half-tamed soil had come to flowering in him. In blood he was as English as though he had been born in London, but he seemed as utterly indigenous to the New World as the Tawnies themselves.

Mr. Parre's eyes went through a casement window. There he saw the old oak tree that had for twenty years been called "Yellow Clay's oak." Twenty years ago, and all that summer long, the heat had been beyond endurance. There had fallen but little rain. But the dry thunder had rolled down the shrunken course of the Catacoonamaug and brought no relief. Once more the English corn had shrivelled away, headless. And his first wife, Elizabeth, had borne a son—Fenton. Perhaps it was conceived too soon after the deaths of her three English-born lads (Anselm, Rufus, and Will—those sweet posies that could not live so far away from the hedgerows of England). So Fenton had been born, and she had no milk for him. There was no nursing woman in Canaan, but Sagamore Chicken-Chuck had a wife, Yellow Clay, and she had lately borne a son. Mr. Parre had, by undignified signs, begged the Indian for the loan of his wife and the Sagamore, courteous as always, had agreed. Twice daily the Indian woman came as far as the oak tree and gave cry. Then Elizabeth would drag herself out of the house and give the baby to its foster-mother. Neither woman spoke or looked at the other one. Like two ghosts, they had seemed. And now both were dead. Yellow Clay feared the big white baby. She dreaded the effect it might have upon her own son. She did not live to see what she

feared come to pass. The Indians said the white child took all the meat from the woman's milk and left naught but ash for her own son. For Totonic never grew in the natural way. Elizabeth also had hated to see her flesh and blood drinking such wild milk. She believed it would affect his maturity. "But does man become as cattle, for all the cow's milk that he drinks?" her husband had argued. But the gossips were soon saying that Fenton was more like a heathen than a Christian boy.

The old oak had turned to russet now, he saw, for fall was upon them, and still he knew serving-women and such believed they saw the ghosts of the two women meet silently and in loathing (both turning away their heads) and pass the baby between them.

The farmers all had spoken. In spite of his day-dreaming, not a point had been missed by Jude Parre. It was not until Totonic stepped delicately before him and told, in good English, how the white men had wilfully permitted their swine to wander so the Indians could not help it if their dogs killed some and others died in death-falls set for wolves, that Mr. Parre seemed to listen with intensity.

He had known from the first moment, with the instinct of a good judge, that the white men were utterly at fault. Yet, as he glanced at certain smug and confident faces of his neighbours, he saw they were expecting him to bring in verdict against the Indians. Harvest was upon them. They needed labourers, and they expected him to punish the Indians by setting them to work in their corn fields.

Colonel Coffin exchanged a look with Piers Gurdson, the hog-reeve. Noah and Seth Bailey were smiling. They knew how to get their lazy neighbours to work. He guessed how they had got together and plotted this thing. How dull were

these English faces in contrast to the kindled brightness of the son of Chicken-Chuck! The Baileys, the "Colonel," James Tucker, Paul Ovington, William Williams—pah! He hated the sight of them. So, for a moment, he shut his eyes.

Totonic had done speaking, and Mr. Parre looked at him and saw how he trusted him. Why so did he? Why should any Indian trust any white man?

"Totonic," he said, "how is it that you come alone to represent your whole village? Is it, then, you are now the sachem?"

"It is so, Mr. Parre. Last night I was elected." And he touched his pelage belt.

"But you have two elder brothers, and it is the English wish that you Tawnies follow the white man's way. Among us it is the elder son who takes the title of his father."

"But not so among us. And my elder brothers—they are of little account among white men or Indians. It is better that I be sachem."

"Well, have it your own way."

Next he questioned his sons. He liked and disliked the manner of these two boys. They spoke manfully and with assurance. It was greatly in the interests of justice that they happened to be duck shooting on the river that day, close by Swamp Town. No one to hear them, he thought proudly, could doubt their word. Yet it would have been but common decency if they had come in early and dressed themselves more properly. Even Totonic had put on the pelage belt of his new office and a useless silver knife Mr. Parre had long ago given his father.

With a suddenly gathered venom, Mr. Parre turned on the white farmers; questioned them sharply. They showed up badly, and he caught Piers Gurdson, the hog-reeve, in a lie.

Mr. Redbank, beside him, murmured approval in Latin and

nodded his thick grey curls. Mr. Parre shook his brave stiletto beard in disgust, and his hands clenched in anger.

"The truth is easy come by," he said, "Piers Gurdson, set upon by all of you, let his charges wander. You thought to gain in labour what you lost in hog flesh. As God is my witness, I wish I had the stomach to clap you all in stocks, first farmers though you may be! I have not the stomach. Piers Gurdson, tell me how much money was given you to make you do this evil thing?"

The hog-reeve sweated and twisted his knitted cap. At last, Fenton broke in.

"It was not for money, sir. 'Twas for a fat sow and a beaver hat."

"Is this the truth? Answer me quickly, or I will have your back cut to mincemeat."

Gurdson admitted that what Fenton said was true. Soon the other plotters were forced to confess. The hall had grown so quiet there was no sound but the misanthropic tock, tock of the brass-crowned clock upon the wall. Totonic's heart beat high. Flying Stone, his elder brother, had told him there would be no hope of justice with so many white men banded together. Fenton was smiling nonchalantly. Christopher had a look of diabolical triumph (no wonder they did not want him at Harvard if he always looked like that when he got the better of anyone!). Jazan was in ecstasy. Salome, with her ill-timed nervousness, giggled.

"Piers Gurdson, I condemn you to sit from sun-up to sun-down in the stocks next Lecture Day. You are relieved of your duties as hog-reeve. You shall pay one English pound to the Indians, for that you have slandered them. Nay, nay . . . I know you have no English pound—but your wealthy franklin friends, let them furnish you. And you seven malodorous men

who instigated this thing (Clerk, read out their blackened names), for every hog you forced the Indians to kill, you shall give one of equal weight and goodness to Totonic to divide amongst his people. Yes! Of course you will appeal this decision to the Quarterly Court at Cambridge. But remember, no decision of mine has ever been reversed by the higher court—such faith have the Magistrates in my judgement.”

The farmers involved gathered in an angry knot outside the gates of Paradise. They had been shown up as tricksters and knaves before that damned King of a Pint Pot! White men should always stand together. If not, how could any of them prosper? They would petition the General Court for a better judge. In their hearts even they knew there was no better.

But the best men among the Canaanites—Mr. Redbank, the parson, Preserved English, the smith, Orde, the taverner, Blue, the miller, Mr. Hurlingheart, the clerk, and Mr. Dillingham—knew that Mr. Parre was right. So, often and often, Canaan was divided thus into two camps. The avaricious, small-minded, and short-sighted were led by the Baileys. The better sort—and the worser (the servants, vagabonds, apprentices)—always backed Mr. Parre.

4

NOW Mr. Parre sat alone in his wainscoted great-chair. They were all gone. Clerk Hurlingheart with his clerk's books, ink-horn, and pen. Mr. Redbank with his Bible and Geneva gown. Constable English was back by now at his smithy, the steel cap and sword replaced by a leathern apron. The Baileys, astride the one sad old horse, had reached their fertile farm. The Blues were back at the mill, and Gervase, for a few days

more, was with them. Orde the tavern-keeper, was at his tavern. So he sat alone.

From the kitchen he could hear the voices of Totonic, Christopher, and Fenton, clucking together in Algonquin. Christopher spoke the language a little haltingly. Once he heard Jazan's laugh. It was the carefree, soulless laugh of childhood. So he guessed that she was hanging about Fenton and Totonic.

Totonic was saying, "But there are no other Englishmen with the soul of the Parres." (Soul, thought Mr. Parre. That is why he had to put it in English. I warrant the heathen have no such word.)

Fenton's reply was too low for him to hear.

These Indians! What a weariness they had proved. And at first it had seemed so simple that red men and white dwell together forever as brothers. But with every field cleared, every stone wall set up, the situation grew more tense. It was as if the white men's walls were a net, criss-crossing the Indians' old domain . . . a net which time would draw tighter and tighter—and what the end might be, he dared not guess. Well, he had done what he could for them. Had had John Eliot himself out to preach to them—and they had eaten the cakes and apples, but the real meat of the matter had slid from off their graceful shoulders.

Another thing he had done for his simple neighbours. The valuable fur trade was held by the Bay Colony to belong to the Commonwealth, but the monopoly of it might be sold in any locality. Mr. Parre had petitioned for it. He hoped in this way to exchange hoes and bill-hooks for otter and beaver. Himself might profit a little, his neighbours greatly. But he would not sell to them the things they most wished. Not fire-arms, or the liquor prohibited by the General Court. He would

not offer cheap red cloth, glass beads, tin buttons, jews' harps, in exchange for fine pelts. So, he supposed, they had gone elsewhere. When Fenton was sixteen, he had made him his agent. But he never dared ask what it was he gave the Indians.

In the attic at Paradise, year after year, hoes and reaping-hooks, scythes, hay-rakes, beehives, butter firkins, thatcher's knee-caps, wooden ploughs, all the gear Mr. Parre had got together to trade with the Indians, lay unmolested except when Farmer Goad climbed up the ladder and took what was needed for the use of the farm. Mr. Parre had told his son he might have these things for trading. Fenton never had touched them.

5

AFTER Tonic was gone, with Jazan skipping beside him, the two Parre brothers spoke of going back to the corn fields. First, however, they went to the hall where Mr. Parre sat alone in his great-chair, the fire dead on the hearth behind him. He looked sad and solitary, sitting there, not even reading. He smiled a little wistfully, knowing why his sons had come. He had done the right thing by the Indians, and they were proud of him.

He got a pleasant sensation of their young strength pouring into him, holding him up. For the moment, things were not as usual between them—for usually he felt the boys pulling away from him, eating at him, destroying him. With all his heart, he wished that the mood might always be between them as at this moment. If only he might have their strength supporting him. Yet to his own father, that old man of Kent in Elizabethan ruff, a worse son had he been himself than ever his boys had been to him. And he had got from his young second wife the same indifference he had given to his first. And from his sons,

the same opposition that he had shown to his father. God saw to it. You got, in this world, even as you gave.

With much understanding, the Parre men discussed the case of the Indians, the election of little Totonic as sachem, and what the future of these people might be, with the white men always hemming them in more and more tightly.

"And how are our numbers, man to fighting man, Fenton?"

"No man can say. My guess is, we are close to even. But the white man will always be the better soldier. He is physically stronger and more determined. For at heart the Indians are timid—even lynxes and wolves are timid."

So he knew that Fenton too had been thinking of the possibility of warfare. "If it comes, it will be the dirtiest war that ever was," Fenton continued, "and there's little to prevent it—except only such men as yourself, sir."

Mr. Parre called Bessie Thirst to fetch sack to them. He glowed with pride at his son's words and was ashamed that he cared for his approval. They sat peacefully together. It was, in a way, a false peace. For Mr. Parre knew he might not question Fenton what it was he gave the Indians for furs—nor about the gossip that linked his name with Johnny Pigge. Yet, if it were true, was it not in some way his own fault? If he had resisted the temptations of the flesh in his student days at Padua and Leyden, might he not have been able to hand on to his son a stronger will to resist evil? Christopher, he guessed, could resist evil. The trouble with him was he resisted good as well.

For a little while he was conscious only of peace and accord, and he loved his young men . . . boys . . . he hardly knew what to call them. At last Fenton sluggishly got to his feet, tightened the muscles of his body as though about to yawn or stretch. Something elusive, arrogant, indifferent, emanated

from him and made his father turn on him a little sharply.

"Forget not, Fenton, the time has obviously come for you. You must marry and settle down. I did not choose Salome for you. You chose her for yourself. You must stick to the implied bargain."

Fenton did not answer, but his long-legged, hairy wolf-dog who, contrary to all Goody Goad's commands, had followed him into the hall, made an insolent gesture with his hind legs, kicking the sand up from the floor.

6

SALOME and Bessie Thirst—once more bare-footed and in their working clothes of linsey-woolsey—set out the trestles and picked up the table-board from where it stood against the wall. So supper was coming. If Mr. Parre wanted to go on with his thinking he must go elsewhere. With a shrug, he got out of the wainscot chair where he had sat almost all day and went down to the foot-path by the river. Hundreds of miles had he walked under these hairy willow trees beside the Catacoonamaug, since first he had built Paradise in the wilderness. Back and forth, back and forth, he would pace with his sharp, urban stride. Here at least he was somewhat alone. No serving-woman pursued him here with buckets and brooms or set a trestle on his feet or grunted at him as they lifted twelve foot table-boards.

When he returned again to the hall, he found Christopher curled up in his great-chair. He was so deep in his reading, he was oblivious of his father's approach.

"Well," said the old man, "I've often heard you and Fenton speak of what fine manners the *Indians* have." Christopher

closed his Aristotle. He had never in all his life taken a hint or resisted an argument.

"Good Indian manners are as fine as anything you may meet. Don't you think Totonic proves the point?"

"Oh, that King of a Pint Pot! Why is he such a paragon? I tell you, Kit, the time is coming when there will be no room for these Tawnies in the Bay Colony. Then must they choose to fight it out with us, move on, or drown themselves in their own brooks."

"It is unjust, sir, to crowd them off the earth. We are taking everything from them."

"The bastards."

Christopher forgot the numberless times his father had befriended these same Indians, and he reddened in anger. The true reason for his father's irritation he had not the subtlety to see. He had taken his father's chair, so it must follow that the first thing he said his father would contradict. He bent his face over his book. In his confusion he did not even know where he was sitting.

"You are doing so much studying, Kit, I suppose you have not given up the idea of returning to Harvard? 'Tis only that confession of faith for you to sign. . . ."

Christopher raised his head. "Excuse me, sir. It was you yourself suggested we discuss that matter no more." Mr. Parre sat himself humbly on a little joint-stool. Goody Goad, as she entered, carrying, on a heavy charger, the wreath of spiced eels for supper, fell upon Christopher, got him out of his father's chair, and the father in the great-chair. So the household sat down together.

Christopher asked his father if he had heard that the train-band wanted Fenton for their lieutenant, now that the old officer was moving on to the new settlement of Marlborough.

Some wished old Colonel Coffin once again, but not the young men. They all wanted Fenton. Fenton did not lift his eyes from his bowl of corn-meal mush. Salome was once more present below the salt, but Goody Goad did not spare her blushes.

"I think the first thing Fenton should do is to stop his trapesing about the woods like an Indian, in savage drawers and no more shirt on than he had the first time I saw him, as he came into the world. I do declare that sometimes when Fenton comes back from his trips I think he is a Tawny himself. He ought to marry and settle down. Then, if he has time, he might be a militia officer. Am I not right, Salome?"

"Oh, Goody, it is the Lord who decides such things."

"Not at all, Miss. 'Tis Fenton."

Fenton caressed the trembling young girl with his voice. Raucous and rough as his tones often were, he had for animals, children, and sometimes for women, a low and lovely quality. His voice touched her like a gentle hand.

"These are things for Salome and me to decide. And in private."

Mr. Parre began to defend his son's "trapesings."

"It is not necessary for all men to be farmers like your goodman and myself." Mr. Parre always referred to himself as a farmer, although his own work on the land was limited to the more symbolical things. Of the humble servitude to the soil, which makes the farmer, he knew nothing.

"But Mr. Parre, all men should have a wife and house, and bring up children. Fenton sets his civic duties at naught."

Christopher interrupted, "Isn't it a greater civic duty to be head of our trainband and an officer in our militia than to beget a row of children?"

The Goodwife muttered that she was not thinking of "be-getting" only. A man might do so and still trapes about.

"In a way I do agree with you, Christopher. If Fenton is wanted for lieutenant he must serve. But I do not entirely approve. Twenty-one is over-young to command all the men of fighting age in a town the size of Canaan. And being much away, he will always be turning his duties over to the ensign. Nor do I wish, Fenton, that you take the office if Colonel Coffin wants it once again. I will not have so good a servant as he misplaced against his will by son of mine."

Fenton went on luxuriating in his bowl of corn-meal mush, milk, and honey. His brother said, "Sir, it is this way. If ever we are called upon to fight, it will most likely be the Indians. Not the Dutch nor the French—and our King is too far away. Old Mr. Coffin knows nothing about Indians."

"*Colonel* Coffin, if you please!"

"He is no more a colonel than I am. He was a cornet only during the Pequot War, some twenty years ago. And why call him "*Colonel*" only because he got an arrow in his heel . . . ?"

"Robert Coffin was killing Indians before either of you were born."

"That may be. But Fenton *knows* them. What if a generation ago *Colonel* Coffin did burn up a lot of squaws and papooses by mistake? Fenton says the whole Pequot War was foolishness."

Mr. Parre and Mr. Coffin were men of the same generation. Stirrup to stirrup, long ago, they had ridden out from Boston together. They had served as lot-layers together in the first laying out of Canaan. True, only that afternoon he had caught the worthy gentleman in a trick, and in every way the two men were of opposite policy, but he resented Christopher's casual dismissal of the wisdom of years. The old rivalry. The pushing younger generation against the set and determined old. The fact that Fenton was the better man for the post and that

everything Christopher said was true, made no difference to him in his momentary anger, although this knowledge would in the end win out. Often enough there seemed to be little connection between Jude Parre's hasty words and well-considered actions.

"Christopher, you argue and contumace every word I say to you. The Ten Commandments bid you honour your father. Why can you not be more respectful—as Fenton is?"

"You will pardon me, sir, I hope?" Christopher was on his feet. Stalked out of the room and out of the house. Often, when in a bad temper, he would wander far by night and sleep, at last, in the hayloft in the barn—for since Harvard had sent him home to cool his heels he had grown sleepless and restless.

Fenton, still unmoved, pulled at the leathern jack of ale. Softly, warily, above the shining silver rim, his eyes went to the low end of the table, found Salome's eyes, touched them with his, and bade her come to him. Then he too left the table. It was true, compared to Fenton, Christopher did seem to resist all authority. But this was because at heart he respected it. One does not fight against things that do not exist, and to Fenton there existed no authority except in himself.

It was only the round, all-seeing eyes of Jazan that had noted how, above the silver-mounted jack, Fenton's eyes had touched Salome and bade her come to him. Salome was on her feet, curtsying and mysteriously blushing. She must go back to the mill. Jazan was uncomfortable for her brother.

7

NOW the short October day was sinking off into darkness. The fire was built upon the hall hearth. Candles were lit on

the candle-beam. Mr. Parre took down the family Bible. For an hour, or perhaps more, the Judge would read to whosoever cared to listen. Often his own children absented themselves, but to the illiterate workpeople of his household, this was the dearest hour of the day. They sat not in idleness. The men wittled out ox-bows, loom spools, sap buckets, wooden latches—all the many things they made of wood. Wool-cards of the women set up an irritating rasping.

Agnes stitched upon a snowy shift. At fifteen only, she had almost filled her dower chest, although she believed there was no one fine enough in Canaan for her. Her smooth, white fingers deftly set the stitches. She had her own thoughts, not in any way connected with her father's reading.

Jazan quickly (and a little slyly) set down the quills she was supposed to fill with yarn for the loom, and began popping corn. She had a basket on the hearth beside her where she knelt. Skilletful after skilletful would she pop, and when the reading was over how good the flaky kernels would taste, washed down with ale! Everyone would thank her for popping the corn. She was always setting by needful, everyday work to do something extra—and foolish. Even now, she was giving the first of the popped corn to the fawning turnspit dog who had followed her from the kitchen.

A widowed woman-servant sat herself before the dainty flax-wheel. Bessie Thirst began to scour the twelve-pound copper kettle. Dirty in all her ways, she had not bothered to fetch in clean sand from the barrel in the kitchen but took what she needed from the floor. Goody Goad, standing with her back to her before the wool-wheel, would not notice. Stout and competent the old woman looked in her well-filled apron. It took twenty miles of walking—forward and back, forward and

back . . . the body bent slightly at the waist—to spin out six skeins of wool.

This evening work was never like the work of the day, for through the rasp of cards, the shrill cry of the flax-wheel, the low hum of the wool-wheel, the honing of knives, and the whittle of wood—over these noises and under them—Mr. Parre read on. Such a man was King over Israel, and another sold the needy for a pair of shoes. Amos and a basket of summer fruit. The war-horse laughing at danger. The unicorn who would not serve man in his furrows. Satyrs dancing upon the ruins of Babylon. Our first parents and their fall.

But tonight Mr. Parre had no more than made a beginning of the story of the man in the land of Uz and his name was Job, than little Hagar stiffened and began to scream. She threw herself upon the floor, doubled up in agony. Another of the convulsive fits she had had from infancy had come upon her. All was in confusion as the poor child was carried to bed. She was wet with sweat, and her flower face was burning.

"No, no, Goody," she sobbed. "It is not my body that suffers but my soul." She said that it had come upon her suddenly as her father was reading that she, like Spira, was not elected to be saved. Her sins, she said, had found her out and she would die in them. She said Mr. Redbank's sermon last Sabbath Day upon the text, "Ye shall seek me and not find me," kept following her about. It was not the worms in her bowels (for she was, at the age of ten, still troubled with this childish vexation) but the worms in her soul that gnawed. And she refused the mixture of senna, rhubarb, and snails the Goodwife offered her.

At last it was decided to send for Mr. Redbank, whose sermon it was had so upset the child. This was the first time Hagar had doubted her salvation. Mr. Parre was half

exasperated. He feared the Goodwife, believing her doomed to early death, had overstimulated her sensibilities. Sometimes it seemed to him that Mr. Redbank himself encouraged her too much in her visions and holy exercises. But these things he could not pretend to understand.

The two older girls, who usually shared the bed with their sister, were ordered to the loft to sleep with Bessie Thirst. In their white night-rails and neat night-caps, they held up a candle and looked at the sleeping Bessie. She lay upon her back, her mouth open, snoring. She reeked of rum, for she was a steady, all-day tippler. She might have done better in a less generous household. Agnes gave one look at the bed and saying, "Never," walked off downstairs again. With some ingenuity she made herself a bed on top the great loom in the loom room.

Jazan sat down upon a stool. If she sat long enough and grew sleepy enough, she would not care. She would be thankful for half of that unappetizing bed. She heard Mr. Redbank's arrival. And Fenton came home from the mill, and she heard his feet upon the stairway and the door of the bedroom he and Kit shared slammed shut. Then, more piercingly than before, she heard Hagar's screams. She thought with horror of that hell that yawns beneath our feet. Demons with wings like bats, and the great hooks upon their wings. Satan tossing souls upon an eternal gridiron. And she was afraid.

If such a one as Hagar could even doubt her salvation, what possible hope was there for herself? She tried to remember the Catechism. She stumbled on the words. Bessie Thirst snored on.

Over and over had she heard of the fate which waits for sinners, but before these things had been but words. Now they were facts. The room grew chill, and she was shaking with cold.

Her dark eyes grew enormous. She almost wanted to go downstairs, where for an hour everything had been quiet, cast herself before Hagar, and beg her to say that Jazan as well as herself was saved. Mr. Redbank had gone home, but Christopher had not come in—nor would he.

Fenton, whom she loved so much. "Oh! Fenton, Fenton, must you go to Hell? And I look down and see you there?" For having thought of someone worse than herself her own salvation seemed surer. She must now, this moment, get to him, tell him of his danger. Let him repent before it was too late. She took up her guttering candle and crossed the hall to Fenton's room.

The "boys' room" was not like any other room in the house, nor did it smell the same. Bear traps and boots lay about. Clothing hung from hooks, and she saw the sheen of the feather cape the Indians had given to Fenton. A favourite saddle. Christopher's books. A wolfskin on the floor.

"Fenton. . . ."

He came up out of his silent sleep as wide awake as a cat, and, feeling the girl shivering against his bed and guessing her cold and frightened, opened the blankets and let her crawl in. Now she was safe. She had no fear, even for her half-brother's mysterious soul. His body gave off a reassuring, even warmth—unlike the sickly, feverish heat she had often felt from Hagar. He talked to her a little of things he thought suitable to her age. Of a tame fox cub he had seen, that would sit on its haunches and beg like a dog. Nothing about souls and salvation. She began to get drowsy. Hell receded.

"Fenton," she said at last, "were you ever afraid?" She was thinking once more of the future life.

Then he told her a thing she had never guessed. How when in strange places like the lands of the French so far to the

north, surrounded by great forests, hostile Indians, and even more hostile French *coureurs de bois*—then he himself had often been afraid.

“And what do you do, Fenton?”

“I pray to God, keep my ears open, and my powder dry.”

That he, too, knew fear comforted her a little. She dropped off to sleep. She woke, hearing the first cock crowing. It was almost the break of day. She found the young man watchful, and wide awake, as though his own familiar room at Paradise were a lonely camp in a fearful forest.

It was as if he had laid back one layer of himself and let her look down deeper into his soul.

8

SIX months had passed since Mr. Parre had made out the papers against Tom Pigge and these had been delivered for execution to Constable English. But still the miserable folk lingered on. Winter had come early, and even those most determined against them realized it would be cruelty to warn them out into the frozen cold. So, through black and lowering months the Pigges stayed on, intimidated a little, moving about cautiously. But now it was spring, and why should not the constable serve his papers? All thought it was Mr. Parre himself who was holding him back, never intending to send them out, but only wishing to frighten them into good conduct. If this was his purpose he had succeeded. The discontent with Mr. Parre was most manifest among those same farmers who had been shown up by him for their trickery to the Indians. It was they who were too righteous to be contaminated by the Pigges.

They chose a time when the formidable Fenton was known

to be off to the north. He had gone out late in January, with Paul Blue and Totonic. Totonic had already returned to Swamp Town, saying Fenton himself would not arrive for a month or more.

What was to be done must be done in his absence, but the plotters waited until they learned that Mr. Parre was to be in Boston for a week at least, attending upon the General Court.

After heavy drinking at Baileys' Acres, six men set out to rid the town of its pest of Piggies. Colonel Coffin, the two Baileys, Paul Ovington, William Williams, and a number of the most important yeomen backed the scheme but were too wary to join personally. It was their farm servants who went, and Piers Gurdson, the erstwhile hog-reeve. The six men became a dozen, and they all were drunk and men of low standing. First they went to Constable English and got from him, by a trick, the warrant of removal. Armed with this, and more hot rum toddy (which Colonel Coffin served at his own back-door) and sticks and cudgels, they started out for the lonely "sty" over by the Sheep Walks.

They came to a hovel, set against a rocky hill amid blackberry brambles and boulders. Meagre chickens pecked about the threshold. To a stake was tethered a spavined white donkey. The men pounded on the door, demanding Pigge. Johnny answered them from within. He and her mother had gone to Marlborough, she said. They had gone to ask the authorities there permission to move the entire family over.

For a second, the men were confounded. They demanded to be admitted so they might search. Johnny had no choice but admit them. The frail door was almost broken down by their knocking. She opened it, stepped aside; and crowding out after her into the cold sunshine came a bevy of dark, coarse, little girls. At a muttered word from Johnny they scattered,

taking to the woods. But Johnny, her heart beating hard, held her ground. She was glad they had come in her father's absence. She was sure she could manage better than he.

Staunch, but a little forlorn, she stood waiting for the men to get through their search for her father. They had shown her the paper. She guessed what was in it. Soon they were all crowding around her. She was to tell truly where the "old boar" was. By cajolery she thought to hold them back until her little sisters could hide. She was not afraid of these men. Why, they were no better than herself! Had it been the Baileys, or Colonel Coffin, or Mr. Parre . . . but this riff-raff! And for such to talk to her about virtue and the good name of the community. And there—talking as fast as any of them—was Piers Gurdson, who it was had first taught her how she might earn a few copper pennies. She could hardly believe they were in earnest.

Will Partridge, one of the Baileys' men, came out of the hut with a goose-feather-bed which he swore had been stolen from Spinster Judith Bailey three years before. He seized Johnny by the arm, twisted it until she cried out. She was only fifteen, and in panic she realized they were in earnest and that there were twelve of them and she was alone. Her dignity, or impudence, broke down. A look of horror welled up in her black eyes. She broke from the men, ran for the woods. There they caught her.

Piers Gurdson had brought pitch with him. It had been intended for Tom himself, but he was away, and they were drunk. Even so, there were enough decent men among them to make all but four say the matter had gone far enough. Will Partridge said he would have none of this. He took a wavering course back to Baileys' Acres. James Tucker (he had a girl himself, this age), was forever in brawls and fights with other men, but

for this affair he had no heart. So the dozen became four only. Yet if the objectors had been better men, they would not merely have slunk away.

Those who remained tore the ragged clothes from her. Her arms hung limply at her sides, making no prudish effort to cover her thick young body. The early spring sunshine fell upon her through the arches of the budding woods.

But when they laid their hands upon her, the young girl was in a frenzy of loathing and fear. They covered her with pitch and plastered her with pine-needles and handfuls of feathers taken from the stolen bed. She looked rather like a quill pig, stuck all over with debris. Then they set her upon the white donkey, and with sticks and belts beat the stubborn creature into an amble. Many of the lashes fell upon her body as well as the beast's.

Thus they escorted her to the Sudbury limits of the town, and told her never to come back again to Canaan or they would do worse by her. The white jenny returned the next morning to her byre. The naked, half-dazed girl wandered the cold April woods.

9

MR. PARRE ambled down Boston Road on his old white brood-mare, innocent of all that had happened in the week of his absence. He looked about the Goose Common and his Town of Canaan, and he liked it well. Now was the world soaked in spring. He noted the well-built houses about the Common. Most of the people huddled together, close by meeting-house, parsonage, burying-ground, smithy, and tavern—even if they had to walk a mile or more to reach their planting fields. Mr. Parre himself was not a villager by birth, but a

country gentleman. His scowling house, which turned its back upon the town and faced the river, proclaimed that fact.

It was good to be home again, although this time in Boston, the Governor and his Assistants had agreed with everything he had said to them. His cousin, the Widow Macey, with whom he always stayed while in Boston, had been most comfortable. And it was kind of her to offer to take in as many of his daughters as he might wish to send her. True, too, Agnes was at an age fit to marry. He was sure Cousin Macey could manage such affairs better than himself.

The Judge spoke lovingly to Breeze, "Breeze, my girl, thou hast ever been a gentle bearer of my old bones. And Canaan—'tis indeed our land of milk and honey." The old mare, who loved his voice, pricked her ears. She knew her stall waited for her. She ambled a little faster.

Before he was off the horse, Goody Goad was out to meet him. No matter what she might think of the Pigges, she was swelled up like a turkey-cock over the slight put upon her master's authority.

"They chose the time well, sir, with both you and Fenton away." And quickly she told him what little was known of Johnny's treatment, and how Tom Pigge had been so frightened she had lent him a cart and young Gervase, the new apprentice, to drive him and his stuff as far as Sudbury.

"But what of Johnny? The nights are bitter cold as yet, and how could she live, naked and foodless, in swamps and woods?"

"Oh, master, we do not know. Perhaps she has already joined Tom in his new remove. The men have been hunting all the wild land south of Canaan, far over into Sudbury. Constable English and half the trainband. Even good Mr. Redbank—he went out in spectacles and felt slippers! And Christopher and Jazan . . . they hunted too."

Mr. Parre's anger was too deep for his usual burst of temper. He did not speak for a moment.

"And Totonic hunted also, sir."

"If she were dead or alive anywhere between here and the Connecticut River, Totonic would find her."

"Some say he did."

"Why do they say that?"

"Totonic hunted with good heart only on the first day. The second and the third day, he stood about and made mock of the white men's woodcraft, saying they could not find the meeting-house if it but stepped a few feet into the woods. So many think he found her. And I think Christopher knows too."

"I will question Christopher."

"It will be of no use, sir, I promise you. Kit is under oath to that wretched little Totonic. They've hidden her, and they will not tell."

With calmness Mr. Parre sought to find the bottom of this shameful matter. He rode over to Marlborough, where the Pigges had gone, to tell the Selected Men how fine a carpenter and brave a fiddler Tom Pigge was. From the dirty little girls he got the names of the men who had come to their hut that afternoon. These were dealt with to the limit of the law. But the worse offenders, the prosperous farmers who had egged on their servants, were never punished. Mr. Parre guessed who they were and thought to bide his time.

Christopher had been engaged to teach the town school that winter but had shown little heart for it, and he was restless. He had refused to go trading with Fenton, although he was a good woodsman. Now he and his father were as one on this matter of Johnny Pigge. But his rashness led him to grief. One day he went boldly to Baileys' Acres, and demanded in vain that these sly old peasants confess their part. On the way out, for

no reason anyone could see, he gave Will Partridge a bloody nose. His father had the humiliation of fining his own son in his own Town Court, and paying the fine out of his own pocket.

IO

ONE day in June Goody Goad, on looking over the winter bedding, found she had not enough deerskins for the men-servants' beds. She called to Jazan to put down her distaff and go to Swamp Town and buy as many of these things as she might for one old iron pot and a couple of alchemy spoons.

The girl skipped off on bare feet, the spoons jungling inside the pot. She knew there was not another female at Paradise, not even the Goodwife herself, who would dare to go thus, alone, to the Indian village.

In spite of its name, only a small part of the thousands of acres the Indians were to hold "forever and forever" was swampy. Much of it was heavy virgin forest. Much black river bottom, as rich as Baileys' Acres. And the white men coveted these things which their neighbours had not the wit to use.

Jazan scrambled up and out of the ditch which marked the boundary of their lands, and immediately she felt that she was in a different world. The poorly tilled fields were rank with weeds. The bones of a slaughtered animal lay across the path. To her left coiled the Catacoonamaug, and she saw the posts of the Indians' weirs and canoes pulled up on a gravelly spit of land. Below her, and still well away, was Swamp Town. An open place, with a long house in the middle, the ground beaten with the feet of the dancers. Scattered all about were the wigwams of the women, looking like shaggy, inverted bowls. She could see an old man mending a net. Two small boys, dragging a snapping-turtle up to their grandma's stewpot. A woman

sitting to her weaving. And to her sensitive nostrils, it seemed that she could already smell the acrid animal smell of the Tawnies.

As she expected, the dogs got wind of her. She stood still, taking care not to clink as much as a spoon, as the miserable yellow pack dashed about her. These curs were never of great heart, and their masters never loved them—except sometimes for dinner. So there she stood, and let their barking announce her.

“Ho’wah?” sang out a woman’s voice, asking who came.

She cupped her hands about her mouth, flung back her head. “Jazan Parre.” The hills echoed her strange name, giving it new mystery, and she thrilled to hear it fly from hillside to hillside, like a bird, and drop down at last and take possession of everything. Even the dogs drew back, as though impressed.

The Indians yelled to one another, but no one called off his dog. The snapping-turtle disappeared into the grandmother’s pot.

Totonic himself came to meet her. In his hand was a cudgel for the dogs. It was the only language they understood.

“Good,” he said, and nodded to her. The dogs slunk away.

“I did not think to find you here. I heard that all the young men had gone north, even of the Merrimac, to drive game.”

“But I could not go. My wife, Moon Goes, will soon bear a child.”

Jazan explained her errand. Totonic walked before her. He was naked except for the clout about his loins. His perfect little body glistened oilily in the sun. They walked without speaking. Jazan understood, without words, why it was he could not go with the hunters until after his wife was delivered. She knew that the strength of the tribe was in the loins of the men. Although by no means a chaste people (especially before mar-

riage), they did not waste their seed, either within marriage or without, as did the more sensual Englishmen. They could not understand such great litters as the Blues or the Trulys. Such evidence of marital passion seemed rather bestial to them. The white man's lust shocked them as much as the studied cruelties of the Indians shocked the white men. Tonic felt that his own strength had left him and was now in his wife's body. He would have brought weakness only to the hunters.

"If it is deerskins you would buy, Jazan Parre, go to Clara-Wood-Tree and buy." He led Jazan to the old squaw's bark hut. She sat by the door of it, smoking her pipe, indolent in the sunshine. Her conical skull was small and almost bald. Her body was pear-shaped. About the haunches she was gigantic. She did not get up at the approach of her sachem or the Judge's daughter. Evidently she had some reason, and would not. Although rich, she was base born and ill bred. Instead of greeting them nicely, she turned her head away, spat, and rubbed the spittle into the earth with a horny hoof. No enemy was to possess himself of this spittle and work a magic upon her. Quietly, she went on smoking.

"Good day, Clara-Wood-Tree," the girl began, shaking the iron pot and spoons at her to arouse her cupidity.

"Hoof," Clara blew the smoke out of her flat nostrils. Tonic was annoyed at her churlishness. He spoke rapidly to her in Algonquin and prodded her with the stick he held in his hand. The creature gave him an ugly look, rose up like a great sow out of a comfortable mire, and waddled off to her cache. Tonic went with her to see that she made a good choice of skins.

Jazan, now that the removal of Clara's bulk unblocked the door, peeped within. There was Johnny Pigge, lying upon a pile of dirty blankets. She was wasted away. Her arms were like

sticks, and her head was as bald as an egg. Her eyes had no mockery in them. Dumbly, the two girls stared at each other—then Johnny turned away her head. Her lids fluttered down, and weak tears trickled from under them. The sick girl opened her mournful eyes again and looked surprised that Jazan still stood before her. It was almost as if she had forgotten who she was. Perhaps she had forgotten everyone in her old world.

Jazan stepped back quickly, for Totonic and Clara-Wood-Tree were returning and she knew that she had seen what she should not have seen. She wanted to look back once more. For was it Johnny? This hairless head, thin cheeks, and woeful great eyes. Totonic knew that she had looked within. She saw vindictive hate come over his usually gentle face as he turned upon Clara, screamed at her, and threatened her with the cudgel he still held. Yet 'tis not Clara's fault, thought Jazan. Totonic himself made her get up, so I looked within. It was he who forgot.

Stiffly, Totonic counted over the skins. Told Jazan she had a good bargain. For a moment they stood alone, facing each other, as Clara waddled off to get her carrying gear. Jazan pushed back her dark hair from her forehead with a narrow, flat little hand. Her eyes burned into his.

"Totonic," she said. "I looked in the hut and I saw Johnny Pigge a-lying there, sick abed."

"No," said Totonic, smiling coldly, "that is not Johnny Pigge."

"Joanna, then, Tom Pigge's daughter."

"No, not even Joanna."

"But who is it, then, Totonic?"

"That is Weetamoe!"

"But she is a white girl—surely?"

"No, Jazan." He looked at her with bright candour. "It is

the sickness that has bleached her a little—turned her green, like you white folks. She is an Indian. True, she was not always a Nipmuc like us—but now Clara-Wood-Tree has adopted her into our tribe. She has been initiated. Our doctor has changed her blood by magic.”

“Why did Clara adopt her? She has never done a thing except for a price. Who pays the price, then, Tonic?”

“Ah,” he said, holding her in check with his distant smile. “Is it courteous to ask the *price* of everything? And who *pays*? I was a child only when your father himself taught me better. You speak more like a Bailey than a Parre.”

“I beg your pardon, Tonic.”

“I forgive you.” He dove into the hut and came back with a lighted pipe. This he smoked for a moment and passed to her. She was flattered that he would smoke with her, and she pulled bravely on the stinking pipe in silence.

“If the birds heard you and sang abroad that Tonic had a white girl in his town, it would make much trouble.”

“I see that.”

“And so, if you must tell the birds anything, tell them that Tonic found a leaf floating down the waters of the Passacon-away. And on the leaf sat a girl, and he took her home and Clara-Wood-Tree adopted her—as you say, ‘for a price.’”

“If I tell the birds anything, Tonic, I well tell them a better story than that. For perhaps birds would believe it, but not Canaanites.”

They exchanged bland glances.

“Very well. And, Jazan, remember you did not ask me who this person *once* had been—only who she now *is*.”

“I see.”

Clara packed her deerskins on her back and settled the moose-hide band across her negligible forehead. She grunted,

meaning that she was ready to start. She would carry this gear to Paradise, in return for the piece of bacon Jazan had promised her. So, to the tune of snapping dogs, they set forth.

She thought of that look in Totonic's eyes, as he had swung about at Clara. For one second his face had been that of Seseek, the rattlesnake. Not the face of a human being. She had seen her father and Christopher, Goody Goad, Deacon Noah Bailey, and Hagar all in equally bad rages. But none of these white folk could, on an instant, set aside their humanity, even their warm blood, and become as Seseek. And how had Totonic been able so quickly to swallow his own venom? She never saw a white man who could do so. They looked red and swollen for an hour afterwards.

But at the end how blandly he had mocked her with his stories of leaves and birds. At the same time he had said with his eyes, "You I trust, Jazan Parre." She delighted in his trust. Never would she betray him, and she forgot the moment when even his head seemed to flatten like the head of a reptile and she had thought of evil Seseek. But at heart she was frightened a little. She wished Fenton would come home.

II

FENTON PARRE had started forth on his expedition on snow-racquets, with only Totonic and Paul Blue with him. Upon each body, next to the skin, fathom upon fathom of white and purple wampum had been wound. The Dutch had taught the Indians to use this wampum for money, and Fenton had found that he could better trade with the savages for wampum than the usual bulky collections other traders used. His father need not have worried that he gave liquor and powder for the skins. Fenton was too cautious. But neither had

he any idea of saddling himself with the beehives and butter firkins his father had bought for trade. The only illegality to his business was that he went too far north and again and again boldly invaded the domains of the French *coueurs de bois*.

He turned with eight canoes laden to the gunwales with beaver, otter, fox, and mink skins, and a horde of the fiercest savages. These frightful fellows set up their camp along the foot-path which led to the Blue mill. The hair was burned from their heads by hot stones, except for a thin line running from forehead to nape. This they stiffened with bees-wax and so made them quaint little manes. When they had made their camp they painted their faces, danced about their roaring fires, and sang all night.

Hagar was sure that they were demons. She could not sleep because of their caterwauling and made Agnes and Jazan, who shared the bed with her (often to their discomfort), get up and pray. Agnes hated them for their dirty ways, but Jazan took a fierce pride in them and stalked about amongst them at Fenton's heels, noticing how honoured and obeyed he was by them.

After four days of revelry, dancing, gluttony, and some drinking, the savages and the lightened canoes drifted off down the Catacoonamaug. Now they were gone, Fenton found time to go on with his paltry courtship of Salome Blue. He had seen her daily working at Paradise but had not as yet sought her out under her father's roof. He himself could not have said what he felt towards Salome. The whole thing had begun when he was sixteen only, and Salome fourteen. She was the only girl commonly to hand. Then in a few years, Goody Blue had started all this talk about marriage. He had kept other young men away, she claimed. He had been caught kissing and

dallying. Well . . . he had no objection to marrying her that he could think of.

One evening Fenton and Kit had been packing the skins in the fur house close by the river. It was stifling in the windowless hut, and when the work was done they went to the horse-trough in the barn-yard, stripped to the waist, washed, and dried themselves on Christopher's shirt. There Jazan joined them. She said no word. They had taught her when to keep silent. Fenton put on a clean blue linen shirt—not one of coarse hemp such as he wore every day. Jazan watched him, all eyes. She saw he had made a bundle of pretty birch-bark baskets embroidered in bright porcupine quills. She knew he had brought them back for Salome. When he picked them up and took the foot-path to the mill she ran along behind him, saying nothing, but wishing to see Salome receive the gifts. So Jazan went courting with Fenton. If she had as much as opened her mouth she would have been ordered back to the kitchen. Not that Fenton cared. Let the whole world come along—so only they did not bother him!

At the mill there were no flower gardens behind neat palings, no cropped turf, no flagged paths, but there was one thing Paradise had not. This was a piece of hard beaten ground that dried out early in spring and was admirably suited to dancing, games, and tests of strength. Often, after work, the young men and boys of Canaan gathered at the mill to play football (which they had learned from the Indians), pitch-the-ball, or stool-ball, which was their favourite. These games were for the men alone. On other nights Tom Pigge would bring his fiddle, and men their maids; and they would dance the old English country-dances. Beaten earth was a good enough floor for them. Now Tom was gone, and Johnny too. Johnny would always stand up so impudently to jig. Jazan glanced at Fen-

ton's back. She wished he would let her talk with him. She wanted to find out about Johnny.

As Jazan and Fenton approached the mill they heard shouts and laughter. All the Blue boys, from Paul who was older than Fenton, down to little Billy who was only four, were out playing quoits. The girl's face brightened as she heard the voices, but Fenton heard, above them and above the roar of the race, the whacking of Salome's loom. Always at work on that household gear of hers that was so famous! Weaving sheets and blankets that would eventually cover him as well—smother him. Plucking the down from geese, shearing the wool from sheep, spinning out the flax. The crash of the loom, the shrill crying of the flax-wheel, the windy rising hum of the wool-wheel . . . half was he ready to give his baskets to Jazan and go home.

But the miller's mastiff had recognized them. There was no turning back. All eight Blues were about him, all of their white-lashed eyes turned to him in admiration—except only Abraham. Abraham was not so hempen as his brothers. He was mousy in colouring, elderly in his ways, smart at his books.

Salome's loom missed one beat, then began again inside the house. Bang, bang, bang. Yet she must have known that Fenton had come.

"Fenton," Dick Blue was saying, "Mercuricus English has taken a she-wolf alive in a death-fall. Will you let your dogs fight it out with her?"

"Any time. Where's Salome?"

The sound of the loom answered his question but the boys indicated the house. They were proud that the great Fenton Parre asked for their sister. So he entered, and Jazan was still at his heels.

It was dusk outside. In the kitchen where the loom was set up it was dark already.

The thin young girl looked up nervously, dropped her shuttle, twisted her fingers.

"Do you like these little things?" the man asked, setting the baskets beside her. "Couldn't you put things in them?"

"Oh, Fenton! They are lovely! Let me see . . . buttons in this one, and in that one tapes . . . and oh! this is just the right shape for scissors—no, too short . . . yes, scissors. Oh, no! My scissors *are* too long."

"I'll get you a little pair when I go to Boston."

"Oh, Fenton—you do so much for me."

"Come on out and play games with us."

"But I am so busy. And—are there any young men about but my brothers?"

"Not one, tonight—except me only. . . ."

"Oh, you, of course . . . you have always been like a brother. . . ." So she babbled on, but she stood up and took off her apron of coarse sacking.

The sun was set. Dusk settled down over the play field. The loom was still—but ever the roar of the race, the clacking of the wooden machinery. There were the shrill flat voices of the little boys. Jazan's abrupt eager laugh, the deeper haw-haws from the maturer Blues. The game was blind-man's-buff.

Salome was a nervous, long-legged girl and held herself with great circumspection when she walked about her house or Paradise. But when she played games or flew down the lane after stray duck or kid, then was she graceful as a deer. The game over or the beast caught, she would wilfully withdraw her grace from the sight of the world, sitting with hunched-up shoulders and neatly folded, toil-stained hands. Her speed and

agility were always a challenge to Fenton. As long as he pursued her, he got pleasure from her.

Fenton was blindfolded. Salome leaped past him. Now he had her, pulling her down to her knees in the dark shade of the gooseberry bushes. His hand, surprisingly delicate on a horse's bridle or a woman's body, touched her face, neck, bosom.

He could not guess who this was. . . . Paul? Dick? Billy? And in the dark his hand pressed against her bodice. She gave a nervous squeal. Her body settled into stone. It was always thus. When he caught her, he hardly knew what to do next. She neither resisted nor co-operated. And a man must have either resistance or co-operation in his love-making. So now, to that strong, curving hand, she made no response except her first involuntary squeal.

Fenton got to his feet and suggested that they all go within. Salome too came into the house. The wild beauty that had lighted her face as she had run was gone. She looked bewildered and humiliated, as she gazed thoughtfully at Fenton's lean, indifferent back. She began to suggest the most foolish things to do. She giggled and tittered and jerked her long body about. Somewhat late, and not very attractively, she was reacting to the caress of the hands she loved.

Fenton looked bored and said a brief good night.

He started out again in silence, Jazan silently following him. But when he stopped and warned her that a willow branch lay across the dark path and held out a hand to her, she took heart, walked beside him, and spoke of a matter which had preyed upon her for weeks.

"Fenton," she said cautiously, "I wonder if anyone will ever know what happened to Johnny Pigge?"

"Not if I—or you—can help it."

So she saw that Totonic had told him of her visit to Swamp Town.

"What will happen to her?"

"Totonic will marry her."

"But surely he has had a wife for years and years. Moon Goes."

"A sachem may have more than one wife. Moon Goes is thirteen years older than he. Nor did he pick for himself. His elder brothers did that. *He* was fifteen only at the time. I remember how he came to me and looked like to weep. He was little and young, and this wife . . . tall as a poplar tree and already ageing."

"But you and father always have said she is more beautiful than any other of the Tawny women."

"Ay, and 'tis she who took Totonic—so young and pliable he was—and she wove all the loose ends in him together, as a woman weaves a basket, and made him something tight and fine and strong. He himself says that without Moon Goes to lead and teach him he would be but half the man he now is. But that time is over. He wishes to pick a woman for himself."

"Is that fair reward to his wife?"

"Oh, Jazan! Never should a woman look for 'fair reward.' " A flash of lightning revealed the river and across the river old Founder's House, and before them were the gables and stacked chimneys of Paradise.

"And of course Totonic would never take this step without consulting his old wife, for she rules him in all things by her wisdom. I suppose that is why he fancies anything so silly as Johnny Pigge. And why not two wives? I see nothing so wrong in that. Sometimes, it seems to me we Puritans have taken every uncomfortable custom out of the Old Testament, and the pleasant ones our teachers have overlooked. Think of

Solomon and Abraham and King David. They had wives a-plenty, and concubines to suit their moods."

"Would you like to be as King David?"

"And look out and see Bathsheba a-bathing her fair self upon a housetop? That would I!"

They both laughed. The only Bathsheba they knew was Goody Blue.

His wolf-dogs, who were turned loose each night to guard the house, came to meet them.

Inside they found the whole household laid abed, except their father only. He sat at the turkey-carpeted table in the hall, with a candle, ink-horn, and sand before him, writing a letter to his cousin in Boston. Only that evening, seeing Jazan stepping off at Fenton's heels, copying his stride, copying the manner in which he held his head, had decided him. Jazan, as well as Agnes, was to go to Boston. It was time the young maid saw something of a more fashionable world. She was growing up wild as a colt. And Agnes and the Widow Macey had been right about another thing. There was no man fit for Agnes here in Canaan. Harvest come, these two young ladies would leave Paradise for the she-merchant's house on High Street, Boston. So he said good night to his two children, got up, lit his pipe, and went on with his letter.

"I find no way to Answer you when you say I wrong my Daughters to keep them so close to Home. Nor do I remember that I thanked you that you offered to take them to live a while with you at Boston. Now I see you spoke Kindly and Well.

"Agnes is a grown woman now, of fifteen or sixteen (I do forget which). I do not wish that she (like Fenton) forget herself and cast herself away upon a Yokel. Nor is she like to do

so. One thing I do ask of you. As you yourself are a Merchant, I desire Agnes to serve in your Shoppe. I do not wish her to think herself any finer than now she does think.

"Jazan, my second girl, is fourteen (I do believe it is fourteen but, God help me, I never can git their ages exact), I would like her sent to a proper Dame School, for she is rustic and sweet as a wild apple-tree. For here we are tedious-simple folk, and servants and colts and the greenwood tree are unfitting tutors to a Young Female of some Station. ('Tis Agnes says so. I have not thought much upon the matter.) But her I will send as well.

"Hagar, I will not send. She is the fairest of my three little maids (yet they say all three are fair). Goodwife Goad, She beg me not to send this Child away from her. She alone can care and Comfort her of her many bodily Afflictions. Her soul is bright enough. But her Visions might prove vexatious to you . . . as yesternight, she said she saw a Demon behind the Privy. None other saw it but the dogs, being called, were much afeared. This sort of thing is Country Superstition, and I do regret that my Servant has put these thoughts in to her head. And she takes it upon herself, not only to order well her own life, but the lives of others—and Reads, Ponders, and Prays, overmuch. Yet I do fear, if I remove her from here, she might die. I cannot take the stand with her I would for a stouter child.

"Your letter gives me the news of the Metropolis, and I do thank you for it. And I do thank you that you saw to my Paduasoy waistcoat, with the silver buttons on it, at Tailor Holmes. . . ."

So his pen scratched on. It was only at night Mr. Parre had any privacy in his large house. He wrote steadily, telling all

the news, for he was fond of his Cousin Macey. How Fenton was back again, and Christopher hated to teach the village lads their letters. And he promised that when he sent his daughters to Boston he would send as well his young indentured servant. The Widow had written him that her own serving-boy had run away from her, dressed in a pair of her dead husband's breeches. He would send Gervase, called Blue, to replace the runaway.



THE November days shortened. Nights grew cold. The beasts were taken in from Commons and now was "killing time." Oxen, sheep, swine—all that had fattened were slaughtered. Meat was soused and salted, powdered and smoked. Head-cheese and rollicks were made. Sausage-meat chopped in a trough with a sharpened spade.

A grisly time it was. A time of death.

How different, thought Jazan, was spring! Then these same creatures, now dead and dismembered, went forth to graze the first lush grass.

Soap was boiled late in fall. The collected fat of a year bubbled and stank in iron pots in the kitchen yard. Jazan made excuses, but no lady was too fine to stir soap.

Geese were plucked. Were these unhappy, bloody birds, held in the vice of the Goodwife's knees with stockings over their heads, the same geese who had so proudly led forth their goslings in May?

It was in November Mr. Parre had decreed his two daughters should fare to Boston.

On the day of their departure Goody Goad routed everyone out of bed long before sunrise. For hours there was nothing to do but sit about the hall in new hoods and gloves, say good-bye to the neighbours who came in to wish Godspeed and wait for Fenton. At the last moment he had decided to take a pack-train to Boston. Wait and wait and wait for Fenton!

Mr. Parre retired into his Ovid. Goody Goad was at her worst. She slapped Bessie Thirst for no reason. She shook her darling Hagar. Hagar cried and cried standing in the middle of the crowded hall—her eyes shut, her mouth open—instead of retiring to her bedchamber. Agnes's dearest friend and rival,

Priscilla Hurlingheart, a la-de-da minx whose impecunious father had foolishly sent her to England the year before for her finishing, was so forward that Goody accused her of making eyes at Fenton. As this was true, Priscilla stamped out of the house, saying she hated Fenton. But she got a kiss behind the beehives in the orchard.

Salome broke a slip-ware crock. She had been in the orchard feeding chickens.

Jazan from where she sat by the hall casement saw both the kiss and the breaking of the crock. She got up uneasily, leaving the eighteen or twenty young people who had come to say good-bye, and walked down to the fur house.

The pack-horses stood on the foot-path by the river. Their bells jingled as they cropped the grass. Gervase in a blue smock tended them. He would walk the twenty-odd miles to Boston and for the winter stay at Widow Macey's as her servant.

"What now is Fenton doing?"

"Swamp Town."

"Oh, I suppose when he has kissed all the white girls farewell he's begun on the squaws?"

Gervase laughed.

"It's that new English stone-horse of his. He's galloping him back and forth to get the kinks out of him." As they spoke they saw Fenton on Tobey approaching along the willow path. The stallion was half fighting, half playing. His grey dappled hide was dark with sweat. Mane and tail were silver.

Fenton was in buff coat and spurred jack-boots, helmet on pommel, sword on his hip, for while in Boston he would attend a rally of militia officers. His uncovered black hair hung about his slightly stern young face. Although he was in the early twenties his face was already marked. When he was older it

would be heavily lined. He looked the very epitome of the Puritan warrior. His sensuality did not show even in his mouth. Only his hardihood showed. Jazan gloried in him and the young grey stallion that seemed almost as much part of him as his own long legs.

"Hold him, child. I'm going up to the barn for a new girth. Gervase, leave the pack-beasts here. Get Agnes up on old Breeze. We'll start now."

"Thank God!" said Jazan, but she spoke to Tobey only. The stallion turned his head and stared at the young girl, his eyes bright, wild, kind, and wonderful. So absorbed was she in the horse she did not hear Salome slip up to her.

"Oh! it is *you*, Jazan. I saw Tobey . . . and I thought . . . not that I really want to see Fenton, but I was going to ask him if I shouldn't pack up a little dinner for you all." Salome was always offering these "little dinners" to Fenton, who preferred inns. "I'm afraid you're so late you will not get to Watertown until . . . It is already most noon. Why not put off your going until after dinner here? Oh"—and she glanced at the open door of Fenton's fur house—"did you ever see such beautiful beavers! He must not forget to lock the door. Even with the Pigges gone there are always some thieves about. I wonder he doesn't take them all to Boston with him today?"

So she chattered on. Fenton came back, changed his girth, and locked the door. Salome had no opportunity to tell him to lock it or to ask him about dinner. He swung into the saddle and was off. Gervase Blue stopped the idle browsing of the seven pack-horses. Their bells jingled. His drover's whip cracked. Jazan had flown away to join her sister on old Breeze's back. Salome heard her excited voice from the bank above her crying, "We are off, we are off!"

Alone beside the locked fur house, her fingers twitching in

the folds of her drab dress, Salome sat with uplifted face. Tears, unstanched, ran down her cheeks.

2

IT was dusk when they reached Cambridge. They had been six hours on their travels. Two of these had been spent at the tavern in Watertown where Fenton found friends to drink with him. The girls had spent the time in an upper chamber.

At Cambridge Gervase and the pack animals took the longer route over the new bridge, through Roxbury and Muddy Brook. Fenton and his charges would use the ferry. Jazan missed the patter of hoofs, the music of bells, Gervase's cries and the snap of his whip. Agnes was glad to be rid of them. Hereabouts were good waggon roads. No one used pack-horses except inland rustics. The very sound of the bells proclaimed her genesis. Even now she was not satisfied. She should have had a man-servant in the saddle before—not Jazan. A gig . . . a coach! Oh, she must have a coach! She had heard of such things but she had never even seen a gig until they arrived at Watertown. In Canaan you walked or you rode a-horseback. But Boston! In Boston some folk rode in coaches. Fenton's voice broke into her dreaming.

"And yonder, under its elms, is Harvard College," he said, and drew rein.

It was the most impressive group of buildings either girl had ever seen. Dominating them all was a handsome structure of clapboard crowned by seven chimneys. Fenton pointed out the president's house, the Indian College, the malt-house to brew the college ale. Under the leafless apple trees and many elms the young men were loitering, for the day had been warmish and this was their twilight hour of recreation.

"If you like," said Fenton, "I will call. If Kit is about he will hear me."

"There's no need," said Agnes. She knew with what rude Indian whoops her brothers summoned each other. Such a whoop was bad enough at Paradise. In the neat square city of Cambridge it would be unbearable vulgarity.

"No," said Jazan. And she pulled her hood closer about her bent head. She had been ashamed for Christopher that he had indeed retracted, signed the confession of faith. Gone back to the scholastic life he loved.

The best time of all the day, Christopher had told her, was this evening bever. From his larder window she saw the butler giving out a dole of ale and bread. Each man brought his own tankard to be filled. Towards evening, Christopher had said, there was a sense of peace, and the conversations, often carried on in Latin as the president commanded, reached deeper into the hearts of the young scholars than at other times of day. So she watched the twilight—young men passing to and fro under the bare November trees. Doubtless among them was Christopher.

"Would *you* have signed, Fenton?" she asked.

"Yes—to get what I wanted. Kit was heart-sick for Harvard."

She saw that what Fenton would have done in strength Kit had done in weakness. It is not always what you do, she saw, but the spirit back of it.

3

NOW they stopped on the banks of the Charles, and Fenton hallooed for the ferry. His voice rang out over the vast, shapeless reach of black water. The horses' slender legs sank in the

muck, and they dropped their muzzles to snuff at the river. They did not drink. The water was rank with brine.

After some time, two men rowed up to a clumsy landing. Between their boats was a flat raft. They discharged their passengers—two of whom called out a greeting to “Young Parre.” Everywhere—in Sudbury, Weston, Watertown, and Cambridge—he had been recognized. Breeze, who made the trip countless times, trembled, but Fenton soothed her and led her aboard the raft. His stallion he would swim. He took off the old saddle, worn to the shape of his body, and the scarlet, fringed bridle and put a rope halter about his head.

“Pull away,” he commanded the ferrymen. A woman dishevelled and panting flung herself down the path.

“Wait . . . in our Lord’s name, wait. . . .”

“And what your business, Goodwife?”

“You must wait. Mr. Fearing himself is a-coming. I fled on to hold you.”

“The reverend gentleman might do his own running,” commented Fenton. One of the ferrymen laughed, showing broken teeth, but the winded woman stared at Fenton as though he had spoken blasphemy.

“Deacon Plunger . . . he thought to sail him back to Boston in his shallop, but the wind fell with the sunset.”

“It always does,” said Fenton.

“You must wait,” besought the woman.

They waited five minutes, and then ten. Fenton drew a silver coin from his wallet.

“I will give you this,” he said to the ferryman nearest him, “if you will wait no more but pull away. I will not leave my stone-horse standing in cold muck and salt water to his belly all night.”

This ferryman was an Irishman, sold in Cromwell’s day as

prisoner of war. Once he had been a Catholic, but even he said, "Sor, an' yer Honour refuses to carry Mr. Fearing across the waters is like Saint Christopher to refuse to carry the blessed Christ Child."

Agnes had seated herself upon a sack. Jazan stood close beside her. The night was dark about them. Both waited with expectancy. It was for the most powerful man in the Colony they waited.

They saw a lantern shining down the steep path they had come. Slowly and ponderously, the great man came. The servant who lighted his master respectfully helped the heavy old gentleman from the landing to the raft, then hung the lantern on a peg. The orange light fell over the clergyman's face. At this time, Peter Fearing was seventy and at the height of his power. It was he who ruled the Governor and the General Court, controlled the local deputies and his brother clergymen. His face and body were ugly with flesh that overlaid the bony structure like melted tallow, but there was a certain sharpness in the glance of his fine eyes. Unwieldy he might be physically—but not mentally. He had a big, loose, eloquent mouth. He could not as much as thank the ferrymen for waiting, without pulling his great mouth together as though to blast sinners. He was richly dressed, all in black—his sparse white hair almost covered by a hood.

Fenton, hat in hand, greeted him courteously, calling him by name.

"Ah, I forget the names of you young men. Tell me, who might your father be? Under whom do you sit for divine instruction?"

"Jude Parre is my father. Mr. Redbank is my pastor."

"Of course, of course, I know—I know . . . hum. . . . Thank you for recalling yourself to my mind." He shook his

heavy head playfully. "Much laxity has come out of Canaan. Your father has often been like a thorn in my side—but still, an admirable and honest gentleman. I knew he had two sons. The one was once thrown out of Harvard, where I am an Overseer, but he ate his humble pie! The other they say is a violent young fellow, with a quicker eye for the wenches than for his Bible. And which might you be?"

"The latter," said Fenton.

It was only Jazan who had seen that the old gentleman had made a joke. Mr. Fearing's personality was so impressive he could not say a trivial thing and make it seem trivial. If, in an outlying township, he but asked where the privy might be, the deacons paled under the weight of his words.

Now they were well out into the middle of the river, and Tobey was swimming valiantly behind. Breeze still trembled. She had pressed her wrinkled old muzzle into Jazan's arm. Mr. Fearing felt the silent antagonism of the tall young man, whose dark eyes seemed of some hidden depth, like the depth of the forest. He had liked the bold way he had said merely "the latter." He laughed.

"I am afraid I put a question hard for you to answer. 'Tis like the fine old legal point, 'Have you stopped beating your wife?' " He spoke good-naturedly. "And these young ladies I see with you. Who are they and to where do you take them for the night?"

"They are the daughters, sir, of my father—but not my mother. Mistress Agnes and Mistress Jazan Parre." At this introduction the girls stood and curtsied as best they might on a raft in the middle of a heaving river. "They have come to be with my father's cousin in High Street."

Mr. Fearing's face lighted up.

"Ah!" He rubbed his jowl, made a smacking sound, and

shook his head. "The Widow Macey." He could not in a hundred words have said more. He admired the woman and he was sceptical of her—but moreover and always, he did admire her. "Then I shall see much of you both," he said. "Not only will you live but across the street from me, but I shall have you in my congregation."

He glanced at Fenton. He did look something of a black-guard. He respected (but he was not sure he liked) that lean, dark, young face that seemed to him—as it had seemed to Mr. Parre—something utterly new. It was not to breed up a race of lawless frontiersmen that the Puritans had left England. It was to raise up young saints—like his own dear son. He thought of how different a kidney was his Forethought, although probably about the same age as this bold fellow.

The aesthetic, inhuman perfection of his son's face floated before his eyes. He could never recall the lad at moments like this, never see him enter the pulpit—for he was "teacher" at his father's church—without a diffusion of joy through his aged heart. That carved white face, those all but silver, close-cropped curls. Forethought, born in his elder years, had been the answer to all his prayers. "Lord," he whispered to himself, "you have blessed me beyond all deserts. Who am I to have begotten such a son?" His lips moved in the lantern light. All knew he was praying, and his old servant pulled off a knitted cap.

The ferrymen were calling to a man upon Barton's Point. This was a rough jut of land, not marshy like much of the coast line of Boston. A landing being made, all waited respectfully for Mr. Fearing to step ashore. He raised one hand and asked God's blessing upon them, then, still wrapt in his thoughts, rolled off down the path that would lead him to Boston.

Boston! Ah, what a candle set in purest silver it had proven! Never should heretic Quaker, Baptist, or Seeker be permitted to spread contagion here! It was as much the State's duty to protect the people from such foul pestilence as from smallpox or plague. To poison a man's mind and endanger his soul was a greater crime than to poison his drinking water and endanger his life. But how did such as Christopher or this "Young Parre" fit in? The young ladies had looked gentle and biddable. But were they surely the man's sisters? It would be only decent to find out.

Once more the stallion was saddled, and the girls settled upon Breeze's motherly back. About the landing was a huddle of fishermen's huts, nets spread out to dry, dories and canoes pulled up on the beach. Was this, then, Boston? They rode up a hill and down a hill, following a coarse cart-path. Beacon Hill was upon their right, rising so boldly two hundred feet above the sea level. Now by moonlight they could see the cage on top filled with tow and tar, ready to be lit in case of danger. Suddenly the city began. The street was paved with cobbles. On either hand were houses close together. And here was the jail and next, the First Church. Here the littered market-place and in the middle of it the Town House. But all these new sights were seen by Agnes and Jazan through a fog of weariness and confusion.

Men, beating upon the cobbles with their iron staves, flashed lanterns in their faces, and one cried, "Welcome to you, Young Parre!" These were the Night Watch.

There was a rankness to the smell of the air, a smell of fish decaying about the wharves, the raw scent of the surrounding sea, the bread in the baker's ovens, the malt in the breweries, the tar of the shipwrights, the acrid tanning of the cordwainers, a smell from open sewers.

It was quite otherwise Canaan smelt, with its cattle and deep-earthed fertility, and always sweet wood smoke from the hearths. Canaan smelt of beasts and fields. This place of man and his industry.

And so at last in High Street in front of a broad house Fenton stopped the journey. Before he could dismount the door flew open and a spry but ageing woman was reaching up to kiss him. The young girls she kissed as well and bade them welcome in God's name.

A hideous black slave in scarlet calico had followed her mistress with a lantern. Jazan had heard of these sooty folk but never seen one before. She drew back in loathing. She feared Cousin Macey as well. Her voice was so quick, so elegant, and she thought of the dame school where she herself was to learn proper deportment for her rank. Fenton would not stop the night on High Street. He would ride on to the Rope and Star, where his pack animals were to be stabled.

With hanging head and heavy heart Jazan followed the fashionable, widowed merchant woman into her immaculate house.

4

JAZAN slipped away from the breakfast table. She hoped she was unnoticed. Such talk of marrying as was going on between her cousin and her sister she had never heard before. The vivacious merchant had taken Agnes's cause to heart. Her she treated almost as an equal, but not the younger girl. Jazan saw that she was supposed to be only a well-brought-up child (which she never had been at Paradise), who was silent unless spoken to, went to a dame school, and kept out of the way!

"Jazan, Jazan!" The widow's quick city voice called her back.

"Yes, madam?"

"Please excuse yourself as you leave the table and curtsy to your sister and myself."

Jazan flushed to curtsy before Agnes, who looked smugly amused.

"This morning, child, I have so much to think about I will not place you with Dame Whitesides. Would you like a little holiday? If you wish, the man-servant will take you for a pillion ride about Boston. There's much new for you to see. . . ."

"Thank you, madam."

"Please give him his orders. He will be in the kitchen."

"What is his name?"

"Gervase . . . isn't it? You should know."

She had never thought of Gervase as a "man-servant" before.

"Yes, madam."

"The servant understands that he is to escort both of you young ladies when you wish to go into the remoter or wilder parts of Boston. And Agnes . . . as I was saying, even if Jonathan Fayrweather is a little plump . . ."

Although one arm about an escort is sufficient to secure a lady's seat upon a pillion Jazan put both about "the man-servant's" waist and hugged him tight.

"Agnes is as good as wed already," she said bitterly, "and then I hope Father will let me go home to Paradise. It's a wealthy merchant's son, now apprenticed to my cousin."

"Jonathan Fayrweather?"

"The same."

"Perhaps he'll escape."

"Oh, not if Agnes really wants him. They say he has been

in love with someone else for two years. Agnes will get him."

"She is no Parre—Agnes."

"Why no Parre?"

"The rest of you are wild folk."

"And you?"

"'Tis a luxury for the rich only—not for a man with his way to make."

"Is Hagar wild too?"

"About God. Where do you want to go?"

"Anywhere. The wharves?"

Old Breeze stood on the cobbles before the Macey house and shop patiently waiting for her riders to make up their minds. Across the street a door opened and into the sad sunshine of November a young man stepped. He was dressed in black Geneva gown. His white-gold curls glittered in the sun. It was a face cut from light.

"The great Forethought Fearing," murmured Gervase.

"Old Peter's son?"

"Yes."

"Last night we crossed upon the ferry with old Peter." And Jazan told at length of the meeting as Breeze picked her way gingerly down the steep slope towards the sea.

The houses were large and fine, but Jazan was amazed to see how little land each house stood upon. She had as yet a farmer's eye that measures wealth in terms of tilled land, cattle, and barns. She saw the proud Fearing church where father and son both preached. So they came to the Town House, and the littered public market sprawling about it. It was market day, and the air was riven with cries of hucksters: "What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack?" "Have you any brass pots, iron skillets, or frying-pans to mend?" "White-hearted cab-bages." And the rattle of milkmaids' pails. The fishmongers'

chant: "Here's fine herrings, eight a groat . . . new mackerel, and oysters, have I to sell." And nuts, gingerbread, clams, and night-caps were sold from barrows. A knot had gathered about the whipping-post to see an idle apprentice whipped. They heard the charge read out against the lad in deep sing-song.

They left the market-place and went to the right, down a steep, cobbled street. Here was a tangle of dirty confusion. The street was so narrow Jazan was in danger of hitting her head on the many shop signs creaking on their iron branches. Yet even here, in the business heart of the city, swine wallowed and hens picked among the horse droppings. As they came out on Dock Square, Gervase pointed out the fine brick buildings and small counting-house of Jonathan Fayrweather's family. Hereabouts the streets were less than five feet wide. Two smocked carters were settling by blows which of them should back up his cart, for pass they could not.

There was an air of squalor and vitality about the docks, and the smell of fish and tar, harbour water, oakum, and ale. Beyond were the masts of ships, the sparkling harbour, and a sweep of sky. Already Boston had found that it was not for her to plough the gravel of her seven hills. She was a thriving port. Many ships came and went. And often enough their sailors were sinful folk. Although the Messieurs Fearing might thunder at the disgraceful godlessness of this part of town, nothing could be done about it. So the sailors came and went, with their brass earrings and cutlasses, their drunkenness and vice.

There was a great ship tied up at a stone wharf. She was newly come, for men were rolling kegs from out her bowels and loading them on a dray. Six red oxen with muddied flanks were yoked to this dray. Jazan must know the ship's name. The men said she was the *Rachel* of Southampton. Nine weeks had she been in crossing, so rough and burly had been the sea.

Jazan knew that it was the *Rachel* that had brought Tobey out from England on her last voyage. And Fenton had asked her captain to buy him a filly fit to mate with Tobey, and some of those odd new weapons called bayonets for his train-band. Glass, too, he had ordered, for when he married Salome and went to live with her across the river in Founder's House he would not be satisfied with windows covered by pig bladders. The scarlet and gold of the *Rachel's* figurehead had tarnished in the long sea trip. She looked tired and sluggish, yet she was beautiful and, to country eyes, passing strange. Jazan heard the screaming of the gulls, noted their beauty, and hated their cannibal eyes.

So the *Rachel* was in and doubtless had brought for Fenton the things he had ordered. Close by, an inn sign creaked in the sea breeze. A coil of rope and in the midst of the rope a gold star. The Rope and Star.

The wind was full of sunshine, white sails, and the slanting wings of gulls. The blue and gold sign of the Rope and Star creaked on its iron branch above her, and beyond was another sign, an anchor, denoting a ship-chandler, and beyond that, a bedizened Moor's head on a green ground. Never had Jazan guessed there were so many pictures in the world as she had seen that morning. In Canaan there were but three. The red horse before Orde's tavern, the dim portrait of an old-fashioned lady in Mr. Hurlingheart's hall, the map of New England at Paradise. Here, wherever she looked, she was enchanted to see pictures rocking back and forth in the windy alleys.

Before the low door of the Rope and Star was a hitching-rack, and to it was tied a row of horses.

"That dappled horse, yonder—isn't that Tobey?" said Gervase.

"It is! It is darling Tobey! Gervase, let me off. And Fenton must be about."

She stopped to pat the horse, whose familiarity in this strange city endeared him to her. The tap-room door was open and she looked in.

Against the breast-high wooden counter leaned her brother. Beside him was a black-bearded, stocky man in sea clothes. Doubtless Captain Oakes, a roistering fellow on land and a sober commander at sea. There was not another soul in sight, neither tapster nor barmaid. The sun came through the crooked diamond panes, glowing on pewter tankards and copper pots. The air was heavy with ale and tobacco.

Now would she go to Fenton. She paused. Fenton tossed off the last of his metheglin, throwing back the lank, black hair from his face. She saw he was tired and had been drinking heavily, although it was only mid-morning. His whole long body seemed to hang from the elbow propped upon the counter. It hung as loosely as a coat from a peg.

Fenton said, "And if you did not bring me bayonets for my trainband, nor mare, nor glass—what then did you bring?"

"Contention for the young men of these parts."

"What?"

"Helen of Troy."

Fenton laughed derisively. "Then do you bring us a corpse long cold."

Jazan stood eight feet behind him. So far removed did he seem she felt her voice, if she spoke, would never carry to him. This was not her brother Fenton. This was the famous "Young Parre." A stranger to her. She stealthily retreated.

With Jazan once more on the pillion, Gervase turned Breeze's head towards the shipyards on Gallop's Point. Through the

arm she laid about his waist he felt her sadness and disappointment.

"Fenton drinking?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Fenton drunk is better than any other man sober."

"He's not exactly drunk."

"He never does anything foolish in his cups. I remember one night when I slept with him here at the Rope and Star . . ."

"Oh, never mind. I want to go home."

No, she would not ride to the shipyards. She did not want to see the waves on Merry's Point. Gervase guessed something had gone wrong in those few moments she was in the tap-room. Perhaps Fenton had snubbed her.

It was those words—those terrible words—that froze her marrow.

"Helen of Troy!" "Then do you bring us a corpse long cold."

5

FENTON had not had his clothes off all night, and his jack-boots were still muddy from the swamps he had splashed through the day before. Now he was trying to recover himself with a few drinks with Captain Oakes. There was no better company in the world than Oakes. They drank metheglin, that spinning honey drink which makes the head hum as though the bees had come back to haunt the misusers of their industry. This is not the drink your wise man chooses after a roisterous night.

Both men were young and hardy. To see them stepping out of the inn and walking up the gang-plank into the *Rachel*, no one would question their sobriety. They went to the Captain's

cabin, and Fenton flung himself down on the bunk. Within the ship it seemed as cold as winter, although outside the November day was warm enough. Oakes told him the London news. Buckingham still favourite and Lady Castlemaine still mistress. The Dutch war still went on, and the seaman fell to cursing the last navigation act.

"And there is much fault in you damned New Englishmen. Why can't you raise some staples England wants—like sugar and tobacco? Everything you send over, from your pipe staves to your everlasting fishes, we have enough of to home. You are competing with true Englishmen. . . ."

"God bless our fishes."

Fenton was listening more to the bees still seeking their honey in his head than to his friend's voice. He sat up and asked for rum. Anything was better than those bees.

"Tell me again," he interrupted his friend. "What was it you said you brought for the young men of these parts?"

"Contention, Young Parre. The fairest face I ever did see."

"What then—or who?"

"She says her uncle is Tailor Holmes of Hoare Lane here in Boston."

"A pious sort. I know him."

"This one . . . she crossed alone. And we had a nine weeks' voyage. So I have come to know her . . . some. She said her uncle was waiting for her, and last night I sent my boy to him and bade him come take his niece from off my ship. He sent word he had not decided how to act in this matter. He believes her run away from home. Said the Lord had not yet instructed him what to do. So he and his three virgin daughters will fast and pray until they get an answer. In the meantime, the lady stays on. I do not want her another night upon my ship—she the one woman, and my men so rough."

"How came she to travel so far alone if she is still young?"

"I saw her first at Southampton. *Then* she said she was a married woman coming out to join her husband here in Boston. But in time, when I came to know her better, she told what I suppose is the truth. She ran away from her stepfather's home in London. She was to have married a Dorset squire. And at last he shamed her—and would not."

"Why was that, and she so fair?"

"God knows. Not I."

Fenton was sitting up in the bunk. His dark, flushed face was in his hands.

Oakes went on, "If Tailor Holmes will not receive her, she swears she will stay on my ship until I am back again in Southampton."

Fenton laughed. The rum on top of the metheglin was working furiously through his tired body.

"A headstrong wench, Captain Oakes."

"A God-damn fool, Young Parre."

Oakes poured out another drink for them both. "Think you a man with three unwed maids in his own house is like to hear the Lord ordering him to take on a fourth?"

"When I have been to the tailor's I have seen the three of them stitching and snipping for their father. They are the saddest, simple creatures you ever did see. God would have to speak in tones of thunder to make them accept a lovely cousin for housemate."

"Well—what am I to do?"

"Sleep on your ship until you set sail."

"I did have some such thought. But she would none of me. It was strange . . . some time I will tell you all. Although truth to tell I played a foolish part. Parre, they say you are a likely man with women—now prove it to me. Get to my

small cabin where the gentry have been sleeping. She is there alone. Go to her and persuade her off my ship."

Fenton got to his feet, and found that the rum had settled to them and the honey-bees still hummed in his head. He heard his voice saying, "I will."

He was filled with a sense of power, compounded of his own fatigue, the rum, the metheglin, and the knowledge that a woman fair as Helen of Troy waited for him. Without word or protest he believed she would open her arms to him. There must be something wrong with the *Rachel's* rum, he thought.

Once more on deck, he stopped to fill his lungs with the fresh sea air, and the wild, wheeling gulls screamed at him. You cannot go to a woman drunk, he thought. But he had such confidence in this one rare woman he believed she would forgive him anything, even a reeling head.

He went carefully down the ladder. How cold and stale were the bowels of the ship. Yet outside was sunshine.

The door of the cabin was open and he stepped within. The place looked cold and desolate. In one corner was a pile of corded chests and boxes. And on a pallet under the port-hole a lady, fully dressed, was back in her bed again. Doubtless this was the only way she could keep herself warm in this dank spot. He thought of the brightness of the day outside and he pitied her.

She lay upon her right side, her face turned away. Her disordered hair curled about her. It was bright copper, heavy and coarse. Her gown was of peach-coloured silk. The gauzy top of her chemise showed above the low horizontal cut of her bodice, and again below sleeves that were fantastically tied with coppery ribbons. Her averted face he could not see, but that gorgeous hair he saw. He saw hands like rose petals with long pink nails. He saw the curve of cheek and chin. Through

the chemise (thin as a dragon-fly's wing) he saw the soft whiteness of her bosom, and rounded arms. He could feel that delicate, sinuous body as though he already held her. And, like any Tarquin, he stepped back and closed the door.

Without raising her head she said petulantly, "Go away, Captain Oakes. I will not go ashore. I will stay here and starve."

Fenton said nothing. He knew when she heard his strange voice she would start up and look at him. One great moment of his life would be over. For as long as he lived he would never forget the short space of time he had stood close to her, looking down upon her. And she had not looked up to see him.

Slowly she moved, pushed back her crude red hair, and sat up on the pallet. Her eyes wandered and came to rest upon him. At first she seemed hardly to see him. Her eyes, like her mind, seemed to have been dragged from some great distance, like sea nymph fished up from ocean floor. She had the smallest features, but all perfect and cut from alabaster. Her eyes were a little too small. The mouth a red, alluring trifle, secret and tight.

She said to him, piteously, "Are you come to take me from this terrible ship?"

"Yes, that is why I am come."

"Do you serve my Uncle Holmes?"

Fenton laughed his harsh laughter. "I serve no man, madam—but with your leave, I will serve you." This was a courtly speech for Fenton, said in a manner foreign to him. On the moment he regretted it. Suddenly his befuddlement left him and he was cold sober. He glanced behind him and was ashamed that he (like any Tarquin) had closed the door behind him. He spoke to the lady gently. "What is your name?"

She said she was Bathsheba Holmes, and her stepfather was

a London printer. Her father long had been dead. It was his brother who was the Boston tailor.

"And he wrote to my mother again and again, urging the great opportunities in the New World. I think it was a lad to learn the tailor's art he wanted. Never another maid. For they say he has three such—all unwed—already." And she was determined to stay upon the *Rachel* and go back to England.

"But that will not be for weeks. What will you eat, Mistress?"

"I will starve."

She flung aside the blankets and swung her little stockinged feet to the floor. With weak hands she tried to order her burning hair. Hands and face were almost transparent. Yes, surely she had been sick, even as she now told him, during the nine weeks of the voyage. But that flaming hair gave the lie to all her delicacy. It was the most living, wanton hair he had ever seen. He noticed how her fingers trembled as she strove to order it, and his first fierce desire for her abated. Bathsheba struck deeply into his physical appetite and into his desire to protect. These two forces had never before been combined in him.

She had a silver comb, but it slipped from her fingers. "I have been so sick."

He took up the comb and sat himself beside her on her pallet. He began to comb out for her the coarse copper mane. The hair clung to his fingers as though it loved them. He noticed that it had been freshly washed and perfumed, and he wondered that she had bothered to keep herself so nice when she had been so sick. She suffered his attentions much as a child might. And he felt ashamed of the drunken, lecherous mood he had been in when first he came to her. Now and then

she would give him a sidewise look out of her too-small, kitten eyes, smile a little, a tight-lipped, sidelong smile.

He gathered her hair in his flexible brown hands—hands that always looked fitter to the arts of love and war than to hold a plough or drive a pen.

“Give me your pins and I will pin it for you.”

But no. She explained she followed the latest court fashion. Only the back hair was pinned up. The rest fell to left and right about her face in ringlets. She instructed him to divide the living strands and brush them about his finger. Six curls he made for her, three upon either side, and she herself arranged the hair about her forehead. Now she was laughing, and did not seem weak at all. “My looking-glass,” she cried. “Do fetch me my looking-glass!”

He held it up for her, feeling like a silly lackey holding up a looking-glass for his mistress’s toilet, and had a sudden loathing for himself.

But at her command he knelt and put green silk shoes upon her feet.

She looked away from him, seeming to forget him. He was emboldened, or piqued, by her indifference and pressed his lips lightly to the strong springing arch.

“Now, Mistress, we will be going.”

She seemed to have forgotten that a moment before she was determined to stay upon the *Rachel* and starve. She got up. He saw, in spite of her extreme delicacy, she was taller than he had imagined, and she carried her head run forward on its long white neck. As he watched her attempt to take a step her face went white. Sweat broke out on a lip so fair he thought it could never be touched by cruder moisture than dew.

He stretched out a hand to help her. She would not accept

of it. But she swayed where she stood. Then with a moan she slipped back upon her bed, lying there in a tumbled mass of blankets and linen. She turned her face away. Faint and lonely, sad and in despair as she was, she began to weep. Her tight little hands fought against the bedding. Seemed to fight against some fate she felt crowding upon her. Fenton went to her, and first he knelt beside her and stroked her hair.

"Be of good heart. Be not so afraid. Your uncle will come for you."

She jerked herself to a sitting position, and without once looking at him began a long account of her wrongs. Words and sentences tumbled out, hardly making sense at all. The Dorset squire who would not marry her. Her stepfather's passion for her and her own mother's jealousy. The horror of the voyage. Captain Oakes's unwanted attentions. The mistake it was ever to have come to this Boston.

Fenton sat beside her. He was holding both her hands and staring at her face. Never once had she looked at him as she spoke. "Don't you see a man, with three maids to make marriages for, will never want another one?"

He laughed, and his hands tightened. "Captain Oakes and I are both bachelors. I'll marry one of your sad cousins and he another. We'll find a husband for the third. With the house thus cleared of maids your uncle will be glad to have you."

The woman stiffened slightly, and at last she turned her little, distant eyes to his. He obeyed that command. Said what any gallant would have said in the first place.

"Better yet—you shall marry me." She pulled her hands away from his, but only enough to tighten their grip upon them.

"Marry you, marry you," her voice rang out high and a

little wild. "And I do not even know your name. You are a stranger to me."

"I am no stranger."

"No, truly, for all my life I have dreamed that somewhere in this world there is such a man. What is your name?" But he did not tell his name. It was as if superstition warned him that he who gives his name gives his soul. He would not give his soul. Those six ringlets. How they had clung to his fingers! What was the story he had heard from his father of the Grecian woman who had snakes for hair . . . and her glance turned men to stone?

"Bathsheba, that ever there was such a woman as you I could not even have dreamed."

"But is that love?" She laughed with open coquetry. "Oh, love . . ." She analyzed and described it in a way he had never heard of before. Surely this woman was no young maid. Love was no novelty to her.

"Perhaps you could love me, Bathsheba."

"Your name!" she cried out passionately. "Tell me your name!" She flung herself back into the bedding, and he leaned over her and smelt the musk and roses in her bosom. But his whole name he could not tell.

"I am called Young Parre."

"How like a wolf you look," she cried, "and how you could love—if ever it came to you—Young Parre."

He felt a blinding light from her half-shut eyes. He obeyed her and set his hard mouth upon her lips. Her arms were about his neck. The rum-scented dream he had had of a woman fair as Helen of Troy seemed realized. Tears came to his eyes and he marvelled to feel them. He could see much of her bosom through the gauze of her chemise, and he wished to move his hand to caress what he saw. He could not. It was not that he

feared to offend her. Her wantonness promised much licence. But he could not move his hand. It was as though this new sensation of love had crowded out all lust. He pressed the whole length of her long body to his. She did not protest. But when he looked into her face, hoping to see there some reflection of his own passion, he saw she was lost in dreams far from him.

"Bathsheba!" he cried to call her back to himself from that lost world to which she had floated.

"I hear you," she whispered, her eyes turned away.

So Mr. Holmes—and with him was Captain Oakes—came and found them. The young Master laughed meaningly, but seeing Fenton's cold, slow anger he quickly left the cabin, whistling beneath his breath a small and ribald tune. The uncle was in command.

This Mr. Holmes was a very respectable, God-fearing man. He had an affliction on his left side. At every fourth or fifth word he seemed to smile cynically to the left, and at the same time his shoulder would hunch forward and his left hand fly up. The two men were acquainted, for the tailor had made in his own shop (with his daughters' and apprentice's help) the Lincoln-green suit upon the young man's back. He said in a steady treble, "Will you get up, Young Parre, from my niece's bed?"

Not another word had he for Fenton, who was ashamed that any man should find him thus, ridiculous . . . with tears in his eyes and limbs shaking. Fenton wished he could sneak out past the twitching tailor to join Captain Oakes. He needed another rum to pull him together. The tailor's bony frame filled the whole door. He spoke with admirable self-control.

"So this is the woman (maid, I dare not call her) whom

God hath commanded me to take into my house and care for as though she were a child of my loins."

Then he explained to the empty air, for he would not demean himself by speaking to either of the young people, how for twelve hours he and his daughters had fasted and prayed, asking God's guidance in the vexatious matter of his brother's truant daughter. His face and arm twitched constantly. In a circle they had knelt, and at the end a sign had indeed come, through Freelove, his dearest daughter. So he had fetched out his gig and had come for this Bathsheba. Where were her possessions?

Evidently the red-headed porcelain woman was not in the least to his liking, but God had given him a sign and the matter was settled. Nor did he seem surprised to find her in Young Parre's arms. With some difficulty, the proud and now speechless lady got to her feet and up the ladder and down the plank to the place where the gig waited.

Fenton was glad to busy himself ordering sailors in regard to Bathsheba's chests and boxes.

When the tailor was about to drive off with the lady beside him, Fenton went boldly to her and offered his hand. They made each other polite speeches, but after the precocious intimacy of the cabin, the words seemed hollow words. Their eyes clung together and said much. Mr. Holmes played with his whip until they were done; then, with a jerk, he turned on the young man. He said coldly that he was to see Bathsheba no more.

"God knows how you carry yourself when out from under your good father's roof, but you shall never come under my roof as long as I have this one with me. This lady—she accepts my hospitality, she shall accept my direction. Amen." He cracked his whip and drove away.

6

CAPTAIN OAKES rolled sturdily out of the Rope and Star. He had a bright and roguish eye. He suggested a creamy sillabub for breakfast, but Fenton shrugged. No, he must be about his business.

That morning he rode to Cambridge to watch the training of the troop, dined with other officers of the Middlesex Regiment at an inn, and came back to Boston in time for two hours of hard work at the fencing school.

The sing-song of his master rang in his ears, "*Mandritta!*" "Carefully . . . carefully, Mr. Parre." "*Touché*—you expose your left flank." "*Passado*—no, sir, more slowly with the *passado!*" The rapiers clashed and sang. But at last, the old man—so skilful, so cautious and dry—said to the young man, whose sides were heaving and face sweating, "Ah, what a swordsman you might make! Just one year in Italy! You have eye, heart, arm, delicacy, and strength . . . everything, sir—but nice art."

All day he had heard commands. The drilling troops on Cambridge Common, the commands of the fencing master. His ears rang with "Columns right," "*Touché*," "Halt," "*Rinverso!*" And that other command. Bathsheba's voice ringing wildly, "Your name! Tell me your name!" He had not told his name.

By evening he sat with Lieutenants Bennington and Robinson, Mr. Chickley and Captain Wolcott, and that clownish fellow from Dedham, known everywhere as Cluff the Bear. The orange light of the tap-room hearth glowed in the faces of the young men. The talk was of women. Fenton had been silent, for the commands still rang in his ears louder than the talk

of his companions. At last he said only a fool could take them seriously, as the more romantic Mr. Chickley suggested. A good wife—chaste, obedient, industrious—such a one is as much part of a man's equipment as his horse or boots or roof-tree. But to get yourself into a stew over the jades, as men did at Charles II's court—pah, it sickened him!

Mr. Chickley further opposed him. Lieutenant Robinson, a Medway cousin of the Blues, interrupted to say, "Well, Young Parre, you certainly have described the sort of woman they say you are about to marry with. Salome is chaste, and all the rest." He was proud that Fenton Parre was soon to be allied to his own humbler family.

Fenton felt cold anger towards Salome rise through him. He thought of the flower face of Bathsheba. He resented Salome, that wooden young thing with nervous hands and speech, who ever and ever was crowding in on him. Would some time smother him, with all that fine weaving. And now he had met Bathsheba. Everything within him had seemed to melt before her—he had no power—all the power was in her. Oh, it would be wise never to see her again. He would be wary . . . he would be wise. . . . No, before God, I will have her if I have to tear down the tailor's house and tear up the tailor. Surely any man might say she was bold and forward to me. I'll have her . . . and Salome is no crock of cream. She'll keep.

He sat quietly with his forehead in his hands, his eyes closed. Perhaps he slept a little. Then he heard Captain Oakes say, "I will help Young Parre to bed."

There was a little laughter. Fenton got to his feet. Without a word to anyone he went with Oakes and, still in his soiled clothing, lay down on the bed he was to share with the robust mariner. He could feel Oakes unbuckle his spurs, draw off the

jack-boots he had been too sleepy to bother with. He was almost asleep . . . and he heard the man say:

"Now will I believe any story I may hear of you and your fortune with women. My Lord of Buckingham could have been no more astute. Me, she would none of—I know not why, for she has a wanton manner. She was always sending messages to me that I was to attend her in her cabin, for this and that, and she chose moments when she knew she would be alone with me. One time she was so negligent in covering herself . . . and her lips and eyes looked to egg me on. It was a proper fool I made of myself. . . . But I only laid a hand upon her and she leaped, half-naked and shrieking, into the companion-way . . . and sailors and passengers—a parson and a parson's wife among them—came running. Thank God I had the wit to say 'twas the rats in the cabin had frightened her. And she had the wit to agree. But it would seem to me . . ."

Fenton turned away. Sighed; heard no more. Slept.

7

JAZAN was one of the fifteen or twenty girls whom Forethought Fearing instructed twice a week in the deeper meaning of the Catechism, hoping to prepare them for church membership. She paid to him the courtesy she paid to all whom she trusted. She completely forgot everything Dame Whitesides was well paid to teach her. She did not look down coyly when he addressed her but stared him straight in the eyes. He thought this direct gaze the most innocent he had ever seen. Half-innocent, half-knowing, wistful, sweet, and wilful, she always kept her disconcerting round eyes upon his face.

One day, as he finished the lesson he said, "*Finis coronat*

opus," and gestured that his pupils were to go. There was a bustling about for capes and clogs. Then he saw the "little Parre girl" was looking at him with an expression of pleasure. She had understood the Latin phrase that had so unwittingly come out. It was hard sometimes to remember to talk only Latin at Harvard where he was a tutor and only English for these children. She was still sitting on the form before him. She made no move towards her cape and hood, although the others were bobbing at him and leaving. And he noted her subtle hands.

"You understood what '*Finis coronat opus*' means?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you do not know Latin, surely?"

"Father taught me a little, sir . . . and then he tired of it."

"It would be of no use to you. It is more important that you learn to be a good and godly woman."

"Oh, I know that—but . . ."

"But what?"

"I should like to have known Latin." She sighed, got to her feet. He felt sorry for her—why, he could not have said.

"Jazan, you still have had no sign—no inward working of the spirit, to show you that you are among those elected by God?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"You have prayed diligently?"

"I have prayed and prayed." Her hands clenched, and an almost angry light came into her eyes. It was true. All this winter she had been on the look out for some "sign," some "visitation of the Spirit." It had happened to others—to Hagar, when six only. You suffered a conversion. You told your clergyman, and if the Elders approved, you were admitted into the church. Why could not this miracle happen to her?

Forethought, seeing her angry, puzzled face, laughed slightly. He laughed with those he knew—never with strangers.

"We poor sinners often pray that God be patient with us. *You* must be patient with God. You are young yet to experience conversion. Watch and pray. How old are you, my child? "

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen!" He had thought her younger than that. For she was little-limbed and small-bodied. There was a pause, but still Jazan stood by the peg her cape was on. She did not start to take it down.

"And if God sends me no sign?"

"Even then, it is possible. . . . Jazan, my father and I have always held that those elected have some definite moment which they can look back upon all their lives as the moment of conversion. 'I was blind and now I see.'" He sat himself again in his chair, as though ready to talk for hours. "Others think otherwise. If no sign of conversion ever comes to you, I will wonder . . . I will begin to think perhaps we are wrong. It may be that there are those so close to God in their own native innocence, there is no *need* for greater manifestation. 'Tis a thing we have discussed—my father and I."

He did not talk to her as a pupil to be instructed, but more as a friend and equal.

"Mr. Redbank has always believed that to make a public spectacle out of one's conversion is bad. That is what he says I and my father do. Perhaps he is right. And perhaps, as I said, there are certain hearts too pure to need the purging of a conversion."

Jazan hardly heeded his words. She felt herself wrapped in the magic of his voice, which was low, at times a little diffident, at times clear and rising, at times dark and troubled.

He was not, to her immature perception, a man as other men. When she saw him walking down High Street, it was as though he led a host of celestial warriors. The glitter of the white-gold curls, close to the thin skull, the high turn of his head, the flash of his grey eyes—in her mind there was nothing humble in the sanctity of Forethought Fearing. Was he not the captain of an invisible army? He never entered the pulpit nor walked the streets, except they were with him. He was no mortal man leading other mortals to God, but a captain of archangels, leading a celestial host down to earth. Although not effeminate, his charm was not masculine. It was as if he had been created with the Cherubim and the Seraphim aeons before the making of man. In that time, there had been no beasts or serpents, no man, no woman, to eat, breed, and die.

And yet . . . upon rising he often suffered the discomfort of a little gas upon the stomach; he was troubled by gross dreaming; he was petulant if the servant burned the gruel; he liked his ducks well hung and his malmsey old. His circulation was poor—he wore wool well into the summer and had hot bricks for his feet on winter nights. He did not like to have the sun shine too brightly on him, nor the wind to blow. These are little things and no one, to see him in the pulpit or passing through the streets with lifted head, could guess that there were little things in his life.

Physically, he had one imperfection. His rare smile broke crookedly over the crowding, incredibly white teeth—and this smile gave him a human look. When he smiled, Jazan knew he was neither Uriel nor Michael. Not even Satan nor Beelzebub. Even a fallen angel would have regular teeth.



8

OUTSIDE the March gale, rough and awkward as a colt, galloped the streets of Boston. Within doors an old man and a young man sat together by candlelight. They sat in the room still called "the kitchen," although no meal had been cooked there for fifteen years. With its low, smoke-stained rafters and twelve-foot hearth this "kitchen" seemed to both the pleasantest room in the house. Each of the men had his own book-lined study, and there were fit rooms of elegance in which to receive parishioners.

Forethought Fearing and his father sat at a scoured table. They were going over a list of their parishioners. The younger man read out the name and the older one commented upon the moral state of each. Most were dismissed with a "worthy prayerful man" or a "virtuous gentlewoman." Some "stank a little of Quakerism." Some led "lives not well ordered." On the whole they spoke kindly and the word "loving" was often on their lips. But the older man could hate the heresy and yet in his heart love the heretic. Not so with Forethought. For him there were only the saved and the damned, and the one he loved and the other he hated. His eyes had the bright, confident hardness of youth and inexperience.

"Tailor Holmes," read Forethought. Old Peter pursed his heavy lips. "I will call again at his house and inquire the health of this mysterious niece. For months they have said she was too ill to attend meeting. Too ill to see me or venture abroad. The young ladies, Thanksgiving, Delilah, and Free-love, cannot be accused of falsehood—such pious, painful creatures as they are. But once as I was leaving I did see from an upper window a most mocking face. If *she* is ill I fancy her ugly cousins might wish to catch her illness."

"A mystery here, surely."

"But as I spoke to Tailor Holmes last Sabbath Day I think I guessed the mystery. He is determined that she shall learn to tailor in his shop. She says she's too ill. Being too ill for honest labour her uncle will not let her do anything else. I will seek out Tailor Holmes."

They passed on down the list. The older man showed some humour, and Forethought would smile his crooked smile at certain of his father's jests. It was only this smile or his rarer laugh that ever disturbed the classical perfection of his face, for he had a head shapely and hard as a hero on a pagan coin. His hair he wore close-cropped as only apprentices commonly cropped their hair. He thought its ashy blondness and crisp curl unsuitable for a clergyman. He did not guess that this casual treatment of his hair gave a classical beauty to his head, revealing as it did the contour of skull and ears, making every turn quick and clean as the turning of a hawk's head.

The lists finished, Forethought went to the red cupboard and brought out a silver sneak-cup and a jug of rum. It was always thus with a little rum they ended their pleasant conferences in the "kitchen." Forethought handed the cup to his father, yawning as he passed it, for all the previous night he had spent in prayer. Since the age of ten when he had first received definite summons from his Maker, he spent at least one night in the week in pious exercise.

"Oh, by the way, son, how are the Widow Macey's young cousins? I have forgotten to put them on our list."

"Well enough. Only the younger one have *I* any dealings with. She's in my Catechism class. I think her name is Jazan. The older one is already a member of Mr. Redbank's church, at Canaan. I think her name is Agnes—or some such thing."

His father had often noticed this shyness in dealing with young women's names. He always acted as if he had forgotten.

"Ah, Agnes!" Peter Fearing smiled with appreciation. "What a big handsome maid she is!"

"She's big enough—I have never thought her especially handsome. I feel little enough interest in *her*. It is as if she has no soul either to save or lose."

"And Jazan?"

Forethought's face looked less guarded. "It is strange that children—little maids—are such creatures of delight. Then in a few years the Jazans become but Agneses."

"Well, we are all God's servants, son."

"Sometimes I think there is at least a decade in a woman's life when God turns his back upon her. Jazan Parre. . . . You never see such wondering eyes in the head of a grown woman."

"That child? She would look at you in the same way if she wanted an orange."

"You are wrong. I have a feeling sometimes when she lifts those eyes to me it is she who should teach me—not I her."

"The fact is, my dear Forethought, this Jazan Parre is not a 'child.' She is but a year younger than your mother was when I married her." He said suddenly, "Will you always be so set against marriage? You know it is a holy state, sanctioned by our Lord's miracle at Cana. You cannot count on me much longer. I grow old, and my heart will not always endure the burden of my flesh. You must marry some time."

The younger was discomforted. After a little he said, "I would like a son who would reverence me as I have always revered you. Such love as we have borne one another is Holy Love. I should like to hand this on through another generation."

Peter blew his nose. At the same moment they heard the knocker at the front door, and, preceded by a servant, Jonathan Fayrweather entered, carrying, in his reddened cheeks, muddy boots, and blown hair, the memory of the boisterous March night.

He greeted both divines with elaborate respect, and they accepted his courtesies as their right—even from the son of Boston's richest merchant.

"I saw your light, sirs, and guessed you were still up. I have come—Father has sent me—to settle a dispute between us."

"But your father did not come to represent his own side of the matter?"

"He trusted me to say what he thinks."

"Now that proves that he knows you to be the honest lad you have always shown yourself. You have both agreed to stand by my judgement?" The old man's pride was always touched when his parishioners presented their problems to him. He had already asked that when he died the word "Peacemaker" should be cut upon his tomb at Copps Hill. Yet, first and last, he had stirred up much strife.

Forethought poured rum for their guest, who gulped the fiery draught and nervously pushed back his hair, which was of an infantile softness. He was not, casually seen, an impressive youth. His cheeks and jowls were fat as a pig's, disguising entirely the fearlessness of his little eyes. His mouth was soft. But he had a certain strength in him. Only his strength did not take the form of fighting against the inevitable, as it usually does at his age. He already had that greatest of all strengths, the power to compromise.

"You have come to a disagreement with your father?"

"Yes."

"Does it concern your business, your soul, or your private life?"

"My private life. . . ." The plump young fingers laced together.

"Well?"

"Father wants grandchildren. . . ."

Mr. Fearing smiled at his own son. "That is but human. We all sooner or later reach that stage."

"There is only one person I want to marry. I want to marry Betsey West, and she's willing—she loves me."

"She is much older than you."

"Six years. That's not the point. The point is she was Guard West's wife for three years and never so much as conceived—as far as we know. There is not much doubt but she is barren. I do not care. I want her so. . . . I love her."

"Ah, Jonathan, that word 'love.' It has been used to cover a multitude of base desires. Myself, I would like it used only in one way—the pure love a man feels toward his God. I'd rather you said you felt lust towards the Widow West."

Jonathan looked the older man fairly in the eye. He said stubbornly, "I love her."

Mr. Fearing thought of the sallow, stooping young woman. She had a sterile look in her narrow hips, flat chest, and anaemic skin. It was partly because the Widow West was so unlike to arouse lust, he stood the young merchant's contradiction.

"And what does your father wish you to do?"

"Give up all thought of Betsey—set to courting Agnes Parre. We are together all day, as you know, in the Widow Macey's shop where my father apprenticed me. Five months now."

"She is beautiful, pious, and well spoken of. Is she then so hard to court?"

"Yes."

It would have been easy to say, "Children obey your parents." Thus would most of the clergymen round about have answered. As if reading Mr. Fearing's thoughts, Jonathan added, "My father will not command me in this matter. He says he does only for my best good. We have agreed to let you decide, sir, what my best good may be."

All this time Forethought had not spoken. But he kept an eye on his father's face, like an apprentice studying the craft of his master. He felt himself in such matters utterly unable to cope with the ministerial duties.

After a long pause, Mr. Fearing spoke.

"Jonathan, without children—or the possibility of having them—marriage loses its sanctity. It becomes but legalized lust. It is different when old people marry—then are the passions spent. But for young people, such as you and Widow West, to marry, knowing you would create no new souls to the glory of God by your ardour, no, I cannot approve. I have always held that there is no justification of the physical relationship between men and women, except for the creation of God's servants. To carry on his old behest to Adam and Eve: 'Be ye fruitful and replenish the earth.' I believe that you should give up Betsey West. And more too. Your father has many daughters but, since Waitstill drowned off the Bermudas, only one son to carry on his distinguished name. You owe it to him. It is your duty. As for Agnes Parre. It is your own concern. You are young. There is no hurry."

A look of maturity, of determination, settled upon Jonathan's childish face. He had promised that he would abide by the clergyman's decision, and he would not go back on his word. At that moment he had the strength to abandon his loving

Betsey, to turn himself away from her, that many men who seemed much stronger would not have had.

Mr. Fearing went on curiously, "And why is Agnes hard to court?"

"Because she began first."

"Is not that flattering to you? Many a man has been led thus into loving and lasting marriage."

"'Twould flatter me—only I know . . ."

"What do you know?"

"It is not me that she wants, but marriage in a respected and wealthy household. She does not feel towards me as Betsey has felt . . . for . . . for over a year now. I don't understand. There are four or five others after her. But she has made up her mind that I am the one." He added simply, "I never met anyone who so believed in me as a merchant. She thinks I am a coming man."

Mr. Fearing had a somewhat similar respect for the plump boy, but he was astounded that a mere chit should see through his insignificant exterior to the hard kernel within.

"So she is after you?" Both the young men laughed—Forethought a little nervously. He had been greatly looked up to, but he had never courted nor been courted.

"I am the envy of Boston."

"It seems to me that this forwardness is more forgivable, although less comprehensible, in so young a maid. My wife I remember. She was younger even. I came to Bath as a Curate. It was before I had broken with the English Church. Well, that miss would not let me be. Was after me like a spaniel after her master. Sought me out privately again and again, said she was suffering doubts of her redemption. 'Twas a home of her own, a husband and babies, that she wanted. But she herself did not know."

"This Agnes knows." Jonathan, heavily, got to his feet.

"You are agreed to give up Betsey West?"

"Yes, sir. I promised to abide by your decision."

"And Agnes Parre?"

A look of pain, which would have been touching on a different face, twisted his mouth a little. He said, his eyes turned away, "If I can't have Betsey . . . nothing else matters—much."

9

FORETHOUGHT stood in the bedchamber, holding up a candle. His father was sitting heavily on the edge of the bed, taking off the purple stuff night-gown he wore over his bed-rail, scratching his obese chest absent-mindedly through the linen folds. On his bald dome was a knitted cap with a merry red tassel. The wind rattled the wooden shutters.

"Father—"

"Yes, son."

"I wish you wouldn't talk of Mother like that."

"What can you mean? And she died before you can remember."

"Still I cannot bear to think . . . 'like a spaniel after his master.' It disgusted me a little. I doubt not the truth—but I hate to hear. . . ."

The whole evening with its talk of pursuing women. Betsey West, with her avid eyes. This Agnes Parre, not content to sit back and be won. And at the last, his own mother. . . .

"I will remember, boy." He took the reproof docilely—but went on, "To criticize you would be like criticizing a lovely spring day, because the grapes are not ripe. Yet . . . it does seem to me that you are too touchy about certain mundane things. Ever and ever, since the world began, men have be-

gotten and women conceived. There is no sin in these things, when carried on with one eye ever turned up to God."

There was nothing unworldly about the old man. He loved the good things of this life—music, stately dancing, fine clothing, courtly manners. True, he did not want organs in churches, dancing upon the Sabbath (or lascivious dancing anywhere), nor clothing too fine for a man's position in this world. He liked his drink, loved his food, and was proud of his wealth. He liked a well-turned wench, like Mistress Agnes Parre, and even young Mistress Jazan with her dark eyes and fawn-like delicacy that promised to grow into something more.

He had a native hearty sensuality, which he had strongly controlled. He wondered if he had not overdone the training of this son, instilled in him too great a regard for purity, because this had been his own problem during those widowed years of Forethought's childhood.

IO

FORETHOUGHT blew out his candle, threw off his outside clothes—except for the fine white cambric shirt he would sleep in. He got in beside the heavy bulk of his father. Almost was he glad that his mother was dead. He could not have borne to think of his father, with his great soul, his mighty mind, sleeping every night in the puissant arms of a woman. The thought raised his gorge, like the thought of incest.

The Widow Macey. He must talk to her regarding worldly conversations between her young charges. And Tacitus. Surely Harvard College was wealthy enough to buy him a new copy to make up for the one that poor student from Providence had stolen. He wondered if President Chauncey had done well to have Jones whipped before the whole college for getting

drunk. The boy was only fifteen. At fifteen, 'tis hard to know how much liquor you can carry. The Widow Macey again. Forever questioning and prying, not into her neighbour's business, but into God's. Was a gossipy, nosey interest in celestial affairs more commendable than the same interest in her earthly associates? Thus easily did the young divine dismiss the intellectual widow.

He fell asleep. The bed sank slowly away from him . . . moved a little, as his father turned in his sleep.

He was in North Boston. He had crossed the canal, and the Fort was to his right. In every direction round about him, except south only, was the sea. He saw his neighbours' houses, just as in life, but bathed in an intensity of light that threw the least detail into painful relief. The nails that held the panes to the leads in Captain Saltonstall's windows, the coarse skin on the comb of a cock strutting before Mr. Hull's. He saw a little brown spaniel with soft, dark yellow eyes, come out from under Mr. Cotton's malt house and—almost with horror—he saw every hair in the sleek coat separately from the next, and the radiations in her luminous eyes. He could see the quills on the wings of the gulls floating above the Fort. This abnormal accuracy of vision was more terrifying than pleasing, and he began to run. The little dog ran after him.

He dared not look behind. The creature was after him. So they came to the Copp's Hill Burying-Place. Both of them were winded. He could hear her panting. And here among the gravestones, he saw—with the same unreal accuracy—the garlands, the death's-heads, the coat of arms, the lettering on the stones. Exhausted, he came to that tomb his father had built for his family. And he saw one newly cut word, "Peacemaker," so he knew his father was dead. He forgot the dog.

He forgot everything, except that he was now alone in the world, and he flung himself on the soft sod before the tomb. Someone touched his wrists. He looked about, remembering the spaniel. A little girl of twelve or so was standing beside him, looking at him with compassion. She had the tender, questioning eyes of a woman, or dog, and suddenly he flung his arms about her and pressed his streaming eyes to her immature breast. He knew, at that moment, so deep a comfort he guessed God had sent her to him. Between his hands, and against his cheek, the child's body began to grow. He felt her breast moving like a living creature, and—choking and gasping—he woke up.

Then he knew. The little yellow spaniel, the comforting child—yes, and the grown woman whose breast had pushed against him—all had been Jazan Parre.

I I

UPON a day in May Bathsheba Holmes secretly wrote a letter. She went to her uncle's shop hoping for private word with the curled and perfumed apprentice, fresh out from London. Her uncle had taken her three cousins to Roxbury to hear a famous divine deliver a Thursday lecture. She found Will Sisley alone. The youth laid down his tailor's goose and bowed superciliously. Although both of them came from London, Bathsheba had, the winter through, snubbed him.

"Will—" she began breathlessly, "I've an errand for you. Do you think you could find out for me who the gentleman is they call 'Young Parre'?"

"Madam, I can find out anything." He noticed the silver coin in her hand, and a letter. This was no idle promise. Will Sisley was a born procurer. But when he tried to ask her a

few questions about "Young Parre," she only twisted her white hands. Either she did not know herself or she would not confide in him.

"There is," he volunteered, "a widowed lady merchant living on High Street, and she has with her two young nieces and their name is Parre."

"Perhaps they are his sisters?"

"Perhaps. If you could describe to me the appearance of this gentleman?"

"No, no," she protested.

"Is he someone you have a letter of introduction to from London and never have seen?"

"Yes," she muttered, "I must see him . . . about a money matter, of course." So they spoke, as one fabricator to another.

"I must get this letter to him. Do you think you could . . . ?"

"I swear it."

At the King's court, where he had stitched before coming out to Boston, great ladies had found him serviceable. He knew as much about intrigue as tailoring.

"While I go about your business, madam, I must ask you to sit in the shop. Of course, this will be very humiliating for you—"

"Oh, I will . . . I'll do anything."

"Even to sitting in a shop?" Her eyes had a driven look in them. She nodded her head.

I 2

JAZAN was in the orchard beside her cousin's house. As she turned to go back to the embroidering expected of her, she encountered a fine young man, dark and curly, standing at her

elbow. He had come up to her in the slyest way. She had been sure she was alone and then behold! there he stood—bowing sarcastically. He had a London look, with the tightest drab breeches, most ruffled shirt. A pincushion and scissors he wore at his belt as honourable marks of his honourable trade. She liked his lovely smell.

“Young Mistress. Pardon my ignorance, but is your father Mr. Parre?”

“Yes.”

“And you have brothers as well?”

“I have two brothers.”

She was nonplussed by him, but curious. Although she might have stepped back into the house, she held her ground. Such arranged curls she had never seen, even on a woman’s head, and her nostrils quivered hungrily for the lovely perfume.

“Are there any other Parres settled in the Colony besides your own family?”

“Never the one,” she said. “We are the Parres.”

“Ah . . . and, young lady, may I beg of you—which of these fine brothers is the younger?”

“Christopher. He is coming back to this house in an hour or more—if you wish to see him. He has gone with our cousin to Roxbury, to hear . . .”

The apprentice waved his hand. Everyone in Boston, it would seem, on this most lovely amorous day, had gone to Roxbury to Mr. Somebody’s Thursday lecture. Such queer folk they were! And yet he had noted that they cared as much for fine clothing as did London burghers.

“I have a letter for him—the younger of your two brothers.”

He was edging round her. An idea came to him. He did not dare break the seal himself and read this letter, but if another broke it . . .

"Young Mistress, the letter is important. Read you this letter and give me answer—in your brother's absence."

Never in all her life had she seen a personal letter. Without guile she did as she was told. The young man boldly leaned over her, reading rapidly what she read in confusion and amazement.

"My only Friend, my only hope in all this Wilderness. You are the only one, who has—since my arrival in this Dreadful Place shown me any Kindness, and 'tis to you, therefore, I must appeal for Help. Think me *forward*, if you will. I know I am. But were you not also *forward*, in the few moments of our Meeting? So if you will forgive me, I will forgive you. On my Arrival I turned over all the money I had brought with me to my Uncle—except only a small Sum sewed into my stays. This was, of course, the act of a Foolish and Trusting Woman, but 'tis done now and ill-done, for I see it will be difficult ever to get it back from him! If I could sell my few Jewels and take the Money from my stays, I would have enough to engage a return passage upon the *Rachel*, which soon will be in again, for now I am *determined* to be back as soon as possible to England. I am so closely Watched and Guarded, it would be impossible for me to either sell my Jewels or to engage Captain Oakes. I am never out of the house, but at least *one* Cousin is at my heels and often all Three. It is given out that I am still too ill to go about but very little, and—in the name of *kindness*,—I am kept a Prisoner. I think it would be a great Relief to my Uncle, if I should Die. Then he would never be asked to return my monies to me. And I have seen many evil Glances exchanged between his Daughters and himself.

"I have only you to whom I can turn, and I must beg the

Favour of your Waiting upon me—and what have I to give you in return for your Time and Patience? I am afraid little enough. You know that my Uncle has forbidden your even entering his House, and so it must be by *stealth*. I do not know your name. I do not know where you dwell, nor whether or not you will come to me, but every Tuesday evening by nine o'clock for this coming month of May, I will be in my Uncle's garden upon Hoare Lane behind the house and behind the Shop.

"Hoping and praying that you will have the Mercy to help me. In Haste and in Despair,

"BATHSHEBA HOLMES."

By the time Jazan had lifted her eyes from the paper, the apprentice was staring down the street with elaborate indifference. He was checking off the points he had noticed in the letter. Item: she might have used *me* to sell her jewels and engage Captain Oakes. Item: she doesn't know the fellow's name, where he lives, and 'twas a brief meeting and she loves him enough to force him to come to her. Item: there is no trickery a lady will not descend to. Item: this may put some of that stay money of hers into my pockets—and there may be some truth in all this. I do not doubt her uncle dislikes her, and how could anything so sad-favoured as Freelove, Delilah, and Thanksgiving help hating so lovely a woman?

"There has been some mistake—this letter cannot be for one of my brothers."

The youth bowed and showed her the "Mr. Parre" upon the outside of the sheet.

"Then it is for Fenton, surely."

"Fenton?" repeated the youth, with bright recording interest. "And where might he be?"

"In Canaan by the Catacoonamaug, twenty miles inland and more."

"Canaan on the *what?*" he demanded in such horror Jazan laughed. Nothing satisfied him but he must know the spelling of the fearsome word.

"Now I must be right to a nicety, young Mistress. Mr. Fenton is the elder. The letter is not for him. I was told most expressly to give it to the younger of your brothers. What's he called, and where may he be?"

"Christopher Parre. He is senior sophist at Harvard. But soon he will be here, for he has taken our cousin, the Widow Macey, upon a pillion to Roxbury to hear the Thursday lecture by the famous . . ." He stopped her with a gesture of his hands.

"Christopher. Senior sophist at Harvard College. Ah!" he recorded.

He was pleased with himself. That red-headed girl . . . now he had the petard to hoist her by—whenever it might suit him. He was of too feminine a nature to be easily dazzled by flowerlike loveliness and delicate airs. As a woman, she attracted him hardly more than her plain cousins. True, as an elegant object upon which to hang cloth, she attracted the tailor in him. As a Londoner, she attracted the Londoner in him. But the man in him was unmoved.

"Mistress, as you say your brother is so soon to return, I will leave the letter with you. Now I do hope I have the names right? Mr. Fenton of the Catacoonamaug and Mr. Christopher of Harvard College?"

"Yes, so they are called."

Jazan stood alone, turning the folded letter in her hand. "Mr. Parre" was written upon it and the tailor had said it was

for Kit. Thank God, soon enough he would be back from Roxbury and her responsibility would be over.

13

LOW-RAFTED, smoky, dirty, whitewashed walls on which generations of students had scribbled pious thoughts in Greek, bad jokes in Latin. A ham Tom Sturgis's mother had sent him last Election Day hung from a rafter. The keg of cider Christopher himself had brought from Paradise, with the saddle of the horse he had bartered for his tuition, thrown on top of it. A cat asleep on one of the two lumpy beds. Christopher eyed this loved scene. From off the chamber four cubicles were partitioned. He entered his own and sat at his shabby desk.

From his study window he could see, in the gathering darkness, the other buildings of Harvard College. He could hear the steady rhythm of the printing press. For three years its greatest work had been going forward and now was all but completed. The *Wunneestupanatamwe Up-Biblum God*. John Eliot's Algonquin Bible.

This was a work which should have interested the young scholar, for he had early acquired a working knowledge of the language. He knew that Mr. Eliot had an eye on him, hoping to turn him to his own use. Christopher had an intellectual disdain for the Indian tongue. He had learned it early and without effort. Therefore it was nothing to him compared to the hard-earned ancient languages.

The final triumph of the white man, this work seemed to Mr. Eliot, and he and his co-workers had taught hundreds of the savages to read their own tongue. For if the heathen but had a Bible in their wigwams, how could they remain deaf to

the missionaries? Kit was not sure of the great results promised.

He opened his Josephus, but still gazed out into the dusk.

That letter. It was for Fenton, but half he felt it was an appeal to himself. He should have immediately gone about the inns of Boston. Found someone to carry it out to Canaan. Now he drew it out of his pocket and laid it on top his book. What to him was the glory of Titus, the heroism of the Mac-cabees? These splendours faded before the fact of the letter. So Tailor Holmes had a niece and he kept her prisoner. He guessed that she was beautiful. Plain wenches do not write thus boldly for help from men they have met but once. They get older and even plainer females to help them. And she was naïve enough to ask what she could give him in return for his time and patience!

Kit's jaw clenched and the memory of the dimples he had had in childhood appeared in his thin cheeks. "You are a woman, aren't you? Well, that is enough for Fenton! Oh, doubtless he will sell your jewels for you, engage a passage. And do much more, if you don't watch out."

For long he had needed a new suit of clothes. Next day he would go to Tailor Holmes and order it.

I4

THE tailor did seem a sinister fellow, all squint and leer and everything jerking off to the left of him. But what an insufferable curled apprentice, holding up pins and tapes, bowing and "mistering" him! The low London vermin. And ay, the one Jazan had described. No one else in Boston had so rank a smell. The apprentice was saying he had never seen, even when he had stitched at Court, such fine shoulders married to

so slim a waist. "Married!" Shoulders to waist! As God lives . . .

Mr. Holmes said, with a jerk, "They may make laws in England but it takes the Bay Colony to make men." The apprentice should see the fine shape of this young gentleman's brother.

"Mr. Fenton, sir?"

"The same."

"Of the Catacoonamaug, Master?"

"Well, you might put it that way."

"But this one—Mr. Christopher, is the younger?"

"True enough, Will."

"Young Parre," he whispered, and pulled a little at the tape he had about the customer's neck. Then Kit understood the mistake. He said coldly, "'Tis my brother who is called 'Young Parre.'"

"Is that the truth? Oh, sir, you will forgive me my mistake—and perhaps rectify it?"

"Tut, tut, Will," said the master tailor. "There's no need to squirm like an eel because you do not know all our young gentlemen's nicknames. And you will wish, Mr. Parre, the best and newest cut?"

Christopher was not sure. "But I'll trust *you*, sir, not to make me look like a London monkey." And he turned his eyes away from the gaping apprentice.

In the back of the shop he saw two blotched and lank young women. They sat upon a platform, tailor fashion. Silent they sat, with downcast eyes and flying needles. So it was to get money for *them* that Mr. Holmes was wishing his young niece to death.

Outside, standing in Hoare Lane, he glanced at the garden. This was the very spot she had appointed. A garden in Hoare

Lane. He wished it had another name. True, the Hoares were a most respected family (whatever some ancient ancestress might have been about). But rather Spring Lane. And he thought of that lovely bypath where women went for water. Cowslips and violets and white ducks quacking! Primrose Lane. There was none such in Boston, and Primrose Lanes, he had heard, lead but to folly. Suddenly his mind, usually quick to action as to anger, was made up. He would write a line to Fenton explaining how the seal came to be broke. Within the hour the letter would be on its way to Fenton.

Today, he thought, is Friday. Oh, there's plenty of time for Fenton to be here by Tuesday evening. Why was it never to men such as himself women appeal for help?

15

ON Wednesday morning Fenton woke in the High Street house. He was in a dark and restless mood. Cousin Macey and Agnes were in the shop, Jazan at school. Black Dido gave him bread and ale in the kitchen, grinning at him with malicious humour as though she knew the secret of his tryst. At last he looked back at her curiously.

"Old dame," he said, "you may go every Sabbath to Peter Fearing's church and Master Forethought may wrestle in prayer with you, but you look like a witch to me. What would you do with a backward miss, who may say she loves you but will have none of you?"

"Fill her up with rum, Master Fenton," giggled the slave. "Rum and gold—they are the best love philtres Ah ever did know."

He laughed, and left her.

The rendezvous with Bathsheba in her uncle's garden had

been as inexplicable to him as the first precocious meeting on board the *Rachel*. That first time she had taken him in her arms, permitting his caresses. Permitted with a passionate passivity that he lay the whole length of his ardent body beside her. In his mind there had been no doubt that if the tailor had given them a little more time, she would in that hour have accepted him. He had expected—in his logical, male fashion—to go on at the second meeting where they had left off at the first. But no sooner had he seen that tall, slightly stooping figure sliding through the moonlight than he knew that he was not meeting her where he had left her before, but at some much earlier period in their courtship. He grew timid in his bewilderment and feared to frighten her away from him forever. He, who had kissed her throat and mouth, was now offered a cool white hand to kiss.

But a few minutes only did she give him. What little talk there was between them was entirely of how much money it would cost to take her back to London, and when the *Rachel* was apt to sail. Only at parting she had turned to him. With outstretched arms, she had whispered bitterly, "I love you, Young Parre." And she was gone.

Now that it was morning, and he walked the familiar street leading from High Street to the docks, he could not understand his own paralysis of the night before. He would go to the garden tonight. He would make her meet him the day after, out on Blackstone's Point, or perhaps he could pretend that she must herself come to the *Rachel* to see about her passage. His whole thinking was a tangled web. Why did he feel so much more physical passion for her now that he was away from her than he felt the evening before? Slowly, he wondered if this was what people meant by love. He had heard

old songs sung in which the lover called his lady "Queen" and himself her slave. Was such slavery awaiting him?

He was glad when Lieutenant Robinson picked him up outside the Rope and Star and asked him to row across the harbour to look at an island his father was leasing for sheep pasturage. The sloshing harbour water. The salt smell of the boisterous gale and the sun pouring down upon them. Every muscle of his body tugging at the oars, legs braced, arms pulling. The creak of the oarlocks. The screaming of the gulls. He was happy.

He shook his hair from his sweating forehead. Now he was glad he was young and free, and he thanked God that this Robinson (although a cousin of Salome's) was no talker. Not a word had they exchanged from the time Gallops Point had been passed.

And tonight she would meet him again. Did she think him the sort to be content with kissing his lady's hand and talking of the price of ships' passages? And at the end she had told him straight out that she loved him. But tonight, would she go on from *there*, or expect him to act as though he had never met her before? He would act as it pleased him. Upon first sight he would take her in his arms and carry her to the garden house he had noted the night before. And his body tightened with the thought of what this night might bring. Even in his present state—full as he was of nothing but Bathsheba, he did not think of marrying her and abandoning Salome.

16

THROUGH the lovely month of May Jazan dutifully fulfilled for Fenton the part he had assigned to her. She and Will Sisley were the go-betweens. This no one knew except the lovers,

Will, and Gervase Blue. Fenton had first offered the unlovely office to the young servant, who had bluntly refused. When Gervase realized that his master was not above pulling his own sister into this stew, he spoke his mind to both of them, but to no one else and to no avail. So he and Jazan fell out for the first time in their lives. Widow Macey was pleased that Dame Whitesides had taught her young charge something of ladyhood. Jazan now never addressed the serving-boy as a friend. All the Widow's thoughts were on Agnes's marriage to Jonathan. This would take place in June.

Fenton came often to Boston, and he stayed with his father's cousin. No happy lover did he look. Soon after his arrival Jazan would flash down High Street, cross the market, pass the First Church, and go up Hoare Lane.

Ever and ever, Will Sisley kept one eye on his tailoring and the other on the intrigue, for Fenton paid him well. Jazan, having passed the shop, would sometimes turn back to the market and make a small purchase. She knew that in the crowd Will stood and watched her. Then she would set forth again. It was never until she had reached some lonely spot that he would come up to her. Sometimes he would let her wander to Copp's Hill, where slate gravestones frown from their headland upon the sea, or out as far as Merry's Point, or to the uninhabited land which bore old Blackstone's name. There was a curious delight in feeling Will Sisley following her. It was like the games she had played in front of the Blue mill. But when he came up to her and she saw that he was a perfumed London varlet, without the manhood of the average farm wife in Canaan, her spirits would languish a little.

But Gervase had received orders that when Jazan wished to go to lonely spots in Boston he was to attend her. All winter through this attendance had been a pleasure to them both.

Together they had explored Boston. The huts of fishermen, standing on stilts among salt marshes. The rope-walks, the fair gardens of North Boston. The shipyards. The lonely hill-tops, crowned by slow-wheeling windmills. Often they had been to the Neck, which alone connected Boston with the mainland. On one hand was Boston Harbour and upon the other was the Back Bay, but in time of storm these two waters rushed together and shepherds dared not drive their mutton to town lest the waters wash them away. Night and day armed men guarded this one land entrance to the town.

Now Jazan often tried to avoid Gervase. Not always with success, for when Will followed Jazan, Gervase followed them both. For this care, he got cross words.

Early in June, Fenton sent her a brief note bidding her get word to Bathsheba that he could not attend her that afternoon aboard the *Rachel*, where during May they had often met. Jazan set out, with Gervase so far behind she thought he had not noted her departure.

She crossed the market and went up Hoare Lane. She loitered past the shop, then dove off again towards the Common. Then Will came out into the warm sunshine. His scissors and pincushion were at his belt, a tape-measure about his neck. With a swaying of plump haunches, he set after her. Gervase hated every curled and greasy hair upon his head.

The day was soaked with sweetness, a sweetness rising from the earth, trembling through new leaves and blossoming fruit-trees. It streamed from the blue bowl of the sky. Not a breath of wind broke this mysterious brooding of nature. It was a day that spoke not only of farming but of love.

Jazan slid over a gate at last and entered William Blackstone's ancient apple orchard. This was older even than Boston. It was as if she had been seeking the loveliest and lone-

liest spot she might find. All about her, the tree trunks twisted like gnome bodies. Each gnome held up a prodigious nosegay of pink and white flowers. Here at last she paused to let Will Sisley overtake her. Gervase stopped behind a gnarled tree trunk.

Will made a leg at his companion and complimented her. Gervase thrust his heavy hands into the belt about his smock and gritted his teeth. He could not hear their words, only watch the pantomime.

"Ah, Mistress," Will was whispering, "you never ask me how my lady and your brother comport themselves."

"No."

"I cannot tell about the meetings on board the *Rachel*, but in the garden . . . ! Are you not curious to know?" Her heart began to beat faster with a slight sense of fear.

The apprentice tapped his nose. "He takes her in his arms, and she takes him. And such kissing and protesting! Usually I get to the garden first and hide behind the garden house. I tell you, it does heat the blood to watch such dallying! Will you meet me there some night? We will watch them together."

"No—never."

He pressed closer to her, and she drew away. "Meet me some night in your cousin's garden. I'll show you what they do. . . ."

"No, don't. Don't. Let me tell my message and be gone. Fenton writes . . ."

"Watching is not like having," broke in Will, "and you might serve me well as my little love."

"Please do not talk so. And then, I am too young."

"I would be gentle and innocent with you, Jazan." He took her stiff hand. "Sit you under yonder cherry tree and I will

court you a little, and if you do not like it I will take you home."

She jerked her hand away and turned on him in blazing anger, "Cherry tree!" she stormed. "Don't you know cherry trees from apple?"

Will was dumbfounded. She showed no anger at his amorous suggestion but was bursting her bodice because he mistook the name of a tree.

Gervase saw her anger. His peasant hands came out of his belt. In a few bounds, he was on them.

"You damned tailor's goose! I'll learn you not to molest young ladies who trust themselves five minutes alone with you."

"But, sir, I only mistook for a cherry whatever that tree over there may be. And she flew at me like a wet hen. I'm no farmer. It may be an oak tree for all I know—or care. Heavens! You are not thinking to beat me?" Gervase had picked up a heavy pruning, lying upon the ground.

"I am."

"Gervase, go home—you are interfering."

"You start, and I'll soon catch up with you."

He grabbed the apprentice, who was at least four years his senior, by his ruffled neckband and belaboured him well. The pincushion flew in one direction and the tape in another.

"Gervase! You'll kill him."

"I'll teach him the difference between an apple and a cherry. That's *apple*! Now, next time you are to know it."

Will screamed loudly for help. Jazan, shocked by the sound of the heavy blows, was even more shocked by this childish scream of fear. Gervase was avenging himself for something, he hardly knew what, and had at him again. Then, in the midst of his sport, he heard Jazan saying, "Oh, thank God

you have come, sir. Make them stop. Oh, please make them to stop."

He felt a firm hand on his shoulder, and turning, let go of Will, who bounded off, with his ruffles torn. The honourable insignia of his craft lost, and most of the buttons burst from his famous breeches. So Gervase raised eyes full of hatred and looked into the cold, silvery face of Forethought Fearing.

17

JAZAN never knew how it came about. Surely, she had not meant to tell anyone. She had wanted to be faithful to Fenton. But when Will and Gervase were both gone, and the young minister looked searchingly and rather impersonally into her desperate face, she had begun to cry. Why were these two servants fighting? She shook her head. Was it because of her? No . . . yes, perhaps. She stopped her tears and lifting her head, wearily pressed the back of her hand against her forehead. There was something resigned, almost elderly, in that gesture, and yet childish. He felt her youth, her confusion, her appeal to him. He laid his hands upon either shoulder. It amazed him to feel how small the bones were, like the bones of a kitten.

"Jazan," he said gently, "I am your spiritual guide at the present time; also, I am your friend. Whatever hurts you, hurts me too. Can you not tell me? We will share this secret thing. I promise you, when once you have told me, you will be at peace."

He knew that thus his father would have spoken but such words had always been impossible for him. How natural they were now. The child wanted his help, and help her he would.

"Come," he said, "we will sit down." And he indicated the "cherry tree," as Will had unfortunately called it.

She began to cry again, for Will's proposal that she should be his "little love" had shocked her. She clutched the elegant white hand of the clergyman. From childhood she had been accustomed to show affection in small ways. It meant nothing to her that she clutched his hand, but to Forethought it meant much.

"Dear," he said, after a little, "you must stop crying now."

To his amazement, she obeyed and began to blow her nose.

"How did you happen to be out on Blackstone's Point?"

"I had a message from Fenton for Will Sisley. He came here to meet me."

"Could you not have left the message at the shop?"

"No—'twas a secret message."

"I did not know that men had secret messages for their tailors."

Soon it all came out. She never would have betrayed Fenton to a human being, but this man beside her was no human being. She knew him little and trusted him deeply. And for over a month now, her heart had been riven by this evil business. She had no one to whom she might speak, and then Uriel, or Michael (she hardly knew which archangel he was), had sat himself upon the ground beside her, and she told.

There were a hundred things Forethought might have said wrong. He said none of them. He held the trusting hand with a reassuring clasp. He did not know that she would have held Fenton's or Gervase's or Tonic's hand as quickly. He felt that he held her soul.

He said at last, "I am glad you have told me of this naughty thing, Jazan. You are too young a maid to bear alone the burden of another's sins. And I understand how the part you

played was not through evil, but only for the love you bear your brother. 'Tis that Fenton Parre I find at fault. For I think it as wicked for a man to thrust his young sister into such a rôle as slyly to meet a woman behind her guardian's back—there is no thought of marrying, is there?"

"Fenton has long been booked to wed Salome Blue."

"Oh, I'd like to see him exposed before the General Court."

"But you promised me, sir, not a word would you say."

She looked him squarely in the face, to see if the promise was to hold. Her eyes, which had been soft with tears, hardened. He accepted the challenge he read in her eyes.

He said calmly, "I give you my word. Before God, I will keep my word, Jazan. I have only one interest in this whole sordid affair. This niece of the tailor—pah! What is she to me—or to God? She stinks to Heaven. Oh, I have seen the strutting jade! Your brother . . . he is a mature man. His sin will find him out. Let him lie upon the bed that he has made—even if it is with that sinful woman. I am sure good Parson Redbank has well instructed him. Perversely, he has preferred evil to good. It is my duty—no, my pleasure to guide you, as you start your way through this thorny world. . . ."

And so he talked to her gently, and she was much impressed.

"We were given our bodies, not as instruments of pleasure," he said at last, "but as obstacles that must be overcome. In Heaven there is no flesh, no marriage, nor giving in marriage. It seems to me that if we are to fit ourselves for our future life we must first subdue the body. Soon it will be of no use to us, for we will live forever in that other world stripped of it."

"Do you believe, sir, there should be no marriage here below?"

He stared at the delicate face ("pixie face" Cousin Macey

called it). All eyes, it was. All spirit, he thought. The unblinking fixity of her gaze would have seemed unmaidenly to any other young man in Boston. Another might have noted that when the small red mouth spoke it spoke boldly. Forethought saw in her only what he wished to see.

"I believe that the elected from among the Elect have no need. God and his Heaven are enough. For the common rank and file let there be marriage. But, Jazan, not for me."

Pale petals fell upon their bare heads. The sun soaked them in warmth. The flowery world dreamed on.

They walked together as far as the rope-walks. Never did he doubt when he parted from her but she would do as he bid. She would stand before Fenton Parre and tell him what she (or rather Forethought Fearing) thought of his conduct. Never no more would she speak to that lewd lady Bathsheba Holmes.

18

FORETHOUGHT FEARING, from his study window, saw the front door of the Macey house open, and Jazan Parre stepped forth, delicately as a fawn. He remembered how small those little bones had felt beneath his hands four hours before. She glanced about her as though fearful that she was followed. Then her quick feet carried her from sight.

The strangest thing in that morning's meeting was the fact that he had called her "dear." He had never used that word before for anyone, nor had anyone, as far as he knew, called him "dear," except his father, who would say, "my dear boy," when irritated with him. It had come out naturally. "Dear, you must stop crying now," he had said. And instantly she had stopped. He thought of his mother, dead when he was but one year old. Perhaps he had heard the word from her. She,

with her complaining baby cradled against her breast, had said: "Dear, you must stop crying," for the phrase had come to his lips in speaking to Jazan as though he were but repeating words heard long ago. His mother, the woman who had in her own body framed the skull he pressed with his fingers. He slipped his hand under his shirt and was sensuously conscious of the warmth of his body, the slow, soft beating of his heart. These things . . . they had been engendered in a woman's body. Had she been fair, this woman? He did not know. But she had loved him and called him "dear"—even as he had called young Jazan Parre.

Jazan, sure now that the officious Gervase was not following her, soon came down to the docks. She received simple compliments from the sailors, whistles and catcalls. A group of dirty men with brass earrings and hairy, naked chests, squatting on the threshold of a low ordinary, began to beat out a march for her progress, "Pum-pa pum-pa, pum-pa poom pom, pa-pum." She gritted her teeth and was a little afraid, but still she knew these things were compliments. As she had been unable to get the message to Bathsheba through Will, she had no choice but to go now to the *Rachel*. Her old loyalty to Fenton was stronger than the new loyalty to Forethought Fearing.

She passed the Rope and Star, and there opposite, at the stone wharf, was moored the *Rachel*. The freshly painted ship sparkled in yellow sunshine. There were purple shadows of masts and cordage upon the well-stoned white deck.

Boldly the young girl mounted the gang-plank and entered the ship. She made a few turns about, wondering where Bathsheba might be, then seeing a ladder, descended into half darkness. She smelled tar and fresh paint, but there was as well a slight odour of bilge water.

After looking about a little, she opened a door and entered Captain Oakes's own cabin. Not once had she spoken to Bathsheba but she knew her now. The woman was sitting on a sea-chest. Over her head was a small window through which sunlight streamed and tangled in the wonderful orange hair. Jazan stopped, speechless before such beauty.

As she stood and stared, it seemed incredible to her that any man—or woman—could be untouched. She believed that as long as she lived, never again would she see so fair a face. The woman smiled at her.

"I am his sister, Jazan Parre."

"Indeed, I know you. You have been kind to me, and to your brother. I am glad to thank you, at last," and she put out a porcelain hand.

But when the delicate hand had been given it was not withdrawn, and Jazan felt the flatness of the two palms against each other and did not know how to be rid of it.

"Fenton cannot come," she said. "I tried to tell Will and save you the trip to the *Rachel*, but somehow I could not."

A flash of injured pride made the lovely face even lovelier, but she said casually enough, "Cannot—or will not?"

"He would come if he could—you must believe that. But in his letter all he said was that he could not come."

The lady laughed.

"I suppose a mare is sick?"

"I cannot even guess."

"Tell him from me," she said between tight lips, "if he is through—I am through."

"What?"

Bathsheba continued in a voice of smouldering warmth, unlike her usual tones, which tended to be high, and, in excitement, ringing. "If he leaves me, it will be my death. He is

the only thing I live for. Without him, I only wish to die. . . .”

“But he cannot marry you. . . .”

“Can’t he?” The voice mocked the young girl, and she smiled. Then her courage left her. She rocked back and forth, clasping her convulsive hands. “Do *you* believe in him?” she gasped.

Jazan hesitated. “I believe,” she answered.

“Oh, why have I trusted him so? I have given him my very soul to hold in his hand. I know he will not come again. This is the beginning of the end.”

She was on her feet, and Jazan was amazed to see how tall she was. “Oh, I will be utterly undone. No, no—*you* cannot understand! Don’t try. You are too young. Ah, once I was as young myself. But that was long ago.”

Jazan saw there was truth in this. The woman was no young maid.

“Do not fear so. Fenton loves you.”

“Yes, now he does—but for how long will it last? And why did you say he could not marry me?”

Jazan would not mention Salome Blue, for she saw that Fenton had not.

“Ask him. Now I must be going.”

“My dear”—Bathsheba bent her flowerlike face, and Jazan smelled the perfume of her hair—“you are a sweet little thing. Will you kiss me before you go?”

“No, madam. You must excuse me.”

Bathsheba—with some reason—drew back in flushed anger. “Oh, you feel I would contaminate you? But I am not as you think. Very chaste have our meetings been.”

“Chaste?” Jazan looked her tactless astonishment. “No. Less now than before.”

Jazan understood Fenton’s recent sullenness. It was a load

off her mind, but she despised the lady. Surely, when Forethought Fearing had talked with her, it was quite different thoughts he had imagined for her. His pure child had been less chaste in her mind than the wanton lady in her body.

Jazan got abruptly to her feet and left the ship.

She dreaded the walk through the admiring sailors. They knew (even if Forethought Fearing did not) that she was a child no more but a young lady of fifteen. She also dreaded passing the Fearing house. As she had started out on her trip to the *Rachel* she had seen a face at a window watching her. Bathsheba, Will Sisley, Forethought, Dame Whitesides, Cousin Macey, and even Boston—she wished none of them ever again. Her heart ached for Paradise.

She stood uncertainly on the dock and Gervase Blue got up from a barrel where he had been lounging and joined her.

"I followed you."

"Gervase," she said, "I want to go home. I can walk there in two days."

"Your father has commanded that you stay here until Agnes's marriage."

"But I am going."

"You cannot go alone."

"No, no. You shall go with me."

"For the present I am by law your cousin's servant. Not yours to command."

"I'm not talking about the law, Gervase. . . ." And in a torrent she poured out her confusion. Slowly they walked up from the docks. At last they stood outside the Macey house in High Street. They were close together, the tawny hair of the smocked servant bent over the black, tumbled silk head of his mistress.

"It is partly because of Forethought Fearing you cannot stay?"

"Yes, in part."

She glanced past Gervase and once more noted a face in the window of the Fearing mansion.

"Then I promise you. Tomorrow we'll start at mid-morning. Cousin Macey will think you are at school."

"She'll think you are at market."

"Get a long sleep tonight, Jazan."

"I'll say I have a headache."

They whispered and planned together.

But no sooner had Jazan gone to her bed that evening than she heard the front door open and Fenton's voice. Then he was on the stairs, entering her chamber. He sat on the bed edge.

Had she got word to Bathsheba? Would she carry a message for him next morning? She told him she was through and never again would carry any message for him whatsoever. So he asked her what had happened.

She told him of the meeting of Blackstone's Point. How Gervase had torn Will's ruffles, burst his buttons, and beaten him, and how Forethought Fearing had come upon them. How he had questioned her. How she had told this strict young man all.

Fenton would not believe her. Her eyes had always been bigger than her mouth. He was furious with her. She had never heard his voice so black with anger.

Again and again she protested that Mr. Fearing had promised to tell no one. He could not understand how she could make a confidant of such a man.

"Oh, I know fellows like that! Doubtless he will tell no one except God, but that in the pulpit and at the top of his lungs!

Do you know I have been elected this afternoon Captain in the Middlesex Regiment? That was why I could not come. You have done me an infernal trick, Jazan. This may well lose me my rank and land both Bathsheba and myself in gaol."

He was silent for a little and when next he spoke was less angry.

"Oh, he may let things lie. There is something about that fellow. . . . And I believe you when you say you could not but tell when he questioned you. . . ."

"If only I could have kept from crying I should never have told. I hope never to see his face again."

19

THAT night in the garden on Hoare Lane, Bathsheba Holmes and Fenton Parre, clasped in each other's arms, saw the moon struggle free of clouds. Will Sisley, hid behind the garden house, watched them. Within the house the master tailor and his three daughters, Thanksgiving, Freelove, and Delilah, raised their voices in evening devotionals.

The watch made its rounds. "Ten o'clock and all is well."

The Widow Macey poured out her troubles to Jonathan Fayrweather. That wretched imp, Jazan, had fled away. She hoped her father would lash her for it. And Gervase Blue. Never could she like so cold and distant a fellow. What a disgrace to a respectable household! A young maid and a servant fled away together. Who could believe that Agnes, as proper as she was beautiful, could be a sister to that wanton, wicked, perverse Jazan.

Across the street Forethought Fearing and his father sat together in the old kitchen. "A little wine for our stomachs' sake," said the old man and filled a sneak-cup with rum.

In Cambridge, Christopher in his cubicle heard his bed-fellow, Ithuril Bowers, call to him "*O lente lente, currite noctis equi.*" Bowers was hinting it was time Parre laid aside his books, blew out his candle. That Latin line. Ovid had whispered it in the arms of Corinna. Faustus waiting for the devil to claim his soul. He blew out the candle and moonlight flooded his cubicle. In the yard below he heard the watch call. "Ten o'clock and all is well."

Jazan and Gervase were in Watertown curled up in the hay-loft of Deacon Twelvetrees's barn. They too saw the moon and heard a watch call the hour.

All night Gervase slept only to wake again. At last dawn welled up over the horizon. Far away a cock crowed. The birds at first talked sleepily together and then began to sing. It was time to be off. At the first whisper of her name Jazan came up from her sleep, fresh, smiling, eager to be on her way. Gervase took out the loaf of bread and the cheese he carried and cut generous slabs for them both.

20

ON the last Lecture Day in June, 1665, Gervase Blue—apprenticed to Mr. Jude Parre of Canaan, leased in service to Widow Evelyn Macey, Merchant, Boston—was stripped to the waist and tied to the whipping-post in Market Square, to receive the "ten great blows of a rawhide thong," the Court had ordered.

The Widow was beside herself as she watched the grim preparations. She loathed the coarse, careless face of the Constable's servant. Her eyes ached at the sight of the lad's back. The muscles might be like steel springs, but the skin itself was delicate as a child's. Sixteen! He was only sixteen! This age,

which seemed like man's estate to the criminal, was childhood to the ageing woman.

It had all been so unnecessary. If, when he had come back as Jude Parre had ordered him, Gervase had told her all about it! Had said he was sorry. Had been frank with her. She could understand disobedience in the young, when they were frank about it. Gervase had been cold and apart. Would not say that he was sorry. Then she threatened to turn him over to the Court. Feeling nagged beyond endurance, he had at last been "frank" enough to say he would prefer that to any more of her gabble.

The Widow was famed for her witty and intelligent conversation. It was the word, "gabble," that had driven her to send the lad before a dyspeptic magistrate upon a very blue Monday. He had ordered the ten great blows. Not even the pleading of the accuser could alter his decision.

Before a gaping crowd, Gervase bent his naked back to receive the lash. The first blow was so sickening he bit his lips and feared he might cry out. Two . . . three . . . four, he counted the licking fury that cut into his flesh like a knife. The blood ran down his flanks. In spite of himself, his ribs were heaving. The Constable's servant, a beery fellow with purple lips, was untying him, handing him his shirt. The Constable addressed the crowd, hoping that this would be a lesson not only to the wretch at the post but to every servant and apprentice there assembled.

After all, it had not been so bad. He straightened himself with a certain bravado. The torn flesh cried out. He was dizzy, but walked away with his head up, paying no heed to the Widow, who stood by full of pity.

He knew that the whipping-post was reserved for servants and common folk. But who could be commoner than he? The

shirt quickly clotted with blood. As he walked on towards the Common, people pointed to him, knowing he had just come from the whipping-post.

His shirt and back he washed at Blackstone's spring and the sun dried him. It was Jazan Parre who had brought this punishment upon him. Instead of resenting her that she had made him suffer, he felt bound the closer to her, for now he had shed his blood for her.

While waiting for him, the Widow had but one idea. How could she make it up to him? When he returned she took all the money from the shop till and gave it to him. She tried to give him advice as well. He took the money.

21

JAZAN and Hagar sat beneath Yellow Clay's oak. Jazan shelled peas. Hagar stitched upon her shroud. Thunder clouds rolled in from the west. Their bellies were sulphurous, and the valley of the Catacoonamaug filled with a poisonous light. The white shroud in Hagar's hands looked yellow. The young maids' faces were waxen. No breeze shattered the intensity of the hot, unearthly air. All day the hens had squatted in the shallow pits they had dug themselves, eyes half closed, feathers ruffled up, beaks open, suffering from the heat.

Jazan had been home for over a month, and except that Agnes was gone away forever and Hagar had decided to make a shroud nothing seemed changed.

"You will never know true peace, Jazan," her sister was saying, "until you can abandon all thought of this naughty world. Such peace as I have known of late! Do you remember when I was a child" (Hagar was thirteen), "I was often troubled by doubts? Those are gone. Mr. Redbank says although

I am young in years in my religious experience I am like a grown woman, ay, an eldern one, close to the brink of the grave."

Jazan shelled the peas and thought her own thoughts. Hagar switched the shroud about with a pretty flounce, as though it were a bit of finery—not her grave-clothes.

"God has sent me some awful dreams of late. Shall I tell forth my dreams?"

She prattled and stitched. Sometimes when Hagar talked it seemed to Jazan her words only parodied those of Mr. Forethought Fearing. Her pious chatter reduced the clergyman's eloquence to absurdity. Yet his white face, the smile that broke so unevenly over his glittering teeth, haunted her.

She thought of Hagar herself. She was so pretty and often had winning ways, yet how pitifully she showed up before strangers, who usually disliked her pertness. It was easy to imagine Hagar with lilies in her hand, dressed in this same shroud she stitched upon, walking down golden streets, singing everlasting hallelujahs. She worked upon her grave linen with as much confidence that soon she would wear it as Jazan shelled peas for supper. Although Goody Goad and Parson Redbank made much of Hagar's piety, Jazan doubted her actual goodness. She never doubted Christopher's. Christopher is good, she thought, even if Harvard would not give him the tutorship he hoped for. But Fenton . . .

She interrupted Hagar. "I doubt if Fenton ever marries Salome. I think Salome knows this. Last night I heard Miller Blue tell Father Kit would suit them just as well."

There was a whisper of leaves, a rustle of fear through the valley and the wind came. Frightened birds whirled like chaff across the sky. The hens got up, squawking nervously as the wind caught their feathers, and ran for the hen house. Every-

thing that might sought shelter. But the trees chained to the earth by their roots trembled and shivered, unable to move from the path of danger.

"Oh, Salome is too old for Kit," cried Hagar. "Just his own age." Her voice rose above the wind. "Kit has never dallied with her. Abraham has told me he has seen Fenton kiss Salome with his hand inside her kerchief." Hagar might be unworldly but she had a sharp nose for gossip. "It is only right that he marry her." There was a blinding flash of lightning, a rattle of thunder. A few enormous drops fell. The trees tossed their arms in fear. "My shroud, oh, my shroud!" and gathering it up Hagar fled for the house, her rickety legs plainly visible below her drab petticoats.

Jazan, like the earth, lifted her face to the loose splashing drops. She set to finish the few remaining peas. Soon those black clouds would break open, and water come down in a flood. The hellish light was gone, and the world darkened.

A horse galloped furiously through the gate. She saw the broad chest of the stallion, the bent broad shoulders of the rider, the scarlet cape streaming from his shoulders. And a woman on the pillion. The cold of the wind and the rain and the sight she saw raised the goose-skin on her bare arms. Jazan stood up, the empty pea pods falling from her lap. Tobey, Fenton, and Bathsheba. The rain came down, and the earth gave off a sweet fragrance. She saw her brother jump from his horse, lift the shrouded woman from the pillion. He kissed her as he set her down. Jazan guessed the truth. He had married her.

Jazan stood a long time letting the rain pour down upon her, the full gourd of peas in her cold hands. Then she went to the kitchen door. No one was there but the old squaw, Clara-Wood-Tree. All the household had crowded into the hall,

greeting Fenton and gaping at his bride. Jazan was glad that Salome had gone home before the storm. Her little brother, Abraham, was there. Soon enough he'd run home and tell her. She turned away.

"Would you like some pie too, Clara?"

"Ugh." Jazan got her the pie. A red-cheeked urchin leaped out of the hall headed for the woodshed. "She's wet," he cried. The rain had only begun in earnest the moment Fenton had taken her from the pillion. She could not be very wet. Not as Jazan herself was. She went to the hall door again, looked within, and disliked what she saw.

Bathsheba stood before the now blazing hearth. She held out her skirts to dry and her flaming hair which could not have been more than damp was loosened. Her face was alight with excitement. Never had she seen so fair a land! Paradise was like an English manor. That wild race through the geese on the Common! The pack-horses they had left behind in Sudbury. Her uncle's apprentice would fetch them over in the morning. Then catching sight of Jazan at the door she called out, "You remember Will Sisley, do you not?" and ended laughing, "Sister Jazan."

Yes, Jazan remembered Will Sisley. But she could not find the right words for Bathsheba; could not play a sisterly part.

She saw her father was parading for his new daughter-in-law the fine urban manners he rarely bothered to use. He was thinking of the women he had known in his youth. Wanton, gay, bewitching, beautiful. Not for the first time he wondered if he had been right in selecting for himself and his family a more austere way of life. He could not blame Fenton—such hair she had! It flashed like flame. It seemed to have a life of its own independent of the head it grew upon. He thought

of old stories he had heard of hair that grew upon dead skulls long in the grave.

As was the fashion in London, Bathsheba wore her clothes with a gallant, studied negligence. For in Charles II's day nothing could be set and stiff. It had been different in Mr. Parre's youth—a period of great ruffs and farthingales, steel hoops, stomachers, corsets, and towering plumes; but he could appreciate the new elegance, and the lady's beauty. Never could Salome have held his wayward son, but this Bathsheba might. Of course the Blues could bring suit, but better a breach of contract before marriage than misery afterwards. The lady had the assurance of an accepted beauty. Doubtless she was somewhat older than Fenton. He was only twenty-three. But how old was Helen of Troy? And who was this woman? Some lady from King Charles's court? It came out soon. She was only the niece of Tailor Holmes. Her stepfather printed in St. Paul's Churchyard. He put his hand to his throat as though to smooth the ruff he had not worn for thirty years. Jazan noticed he bowed grandly from the hips. "Madame," he was saying. "Although, as Fenton says, Founder's House has been promised to him as soon as he weds, I think you would be better pleased to stay with us here at Paradise." He turned about. Christopher who had been upstairs in his own room had at last decided to see what was happening in the hall.

"Fenton's wife, Christopher," his father said as he entered, "and your new sister."

Christopher's face was lighter than Fenton's and more quick to show passing moods. The tip-tilt to his nose, the softer mouth, displayed his thoughts. Now his face was cold and guarded. Soberly he took the hand offered him. He looked ill at ease, something of a rustic schoolmaster. Bathsheba's eyes easily slid off him, and he slid out of the room.

22

IT was the puny Abraham who brought the great news from Paradise to the mill. The whole room had gone black about Salome. The faces of her brothers staring at her, the gimlet eyes of her mother, the pale blue glance of her father. And from this blackness she heard her own voice say, "This is no surprise to me. I knew."

"Nonsense," her mother cried. "He has betrayed his troth with you. I shall bring the matter to court."

"You can't," said Salome. "If I will not bear witness . . . bear witness against Fen . . . against him."

There was a rushing through her head that drowned out the roaring of the race. Yes, she had always known. She fixed her smile more firmly on her face, but with her hands she felt for the stool to sit on, for she could not see.

"You knew, Salome?"

"Why, yes, Mother." Her voice trembled, but was cheerful. This was the one straw she clutched at to save her self-respect.

She was not surprised. She had known. Her secret, smiling face suggested that if she had not had Fenton's love, at least she had had his confidence. The man had told her of this other woman. By this false straw, she began to pull herself out of the black floods that were going over her. When Paul began to question Abraham about the appearance of this new wife, she leaned forward—asking no questions, but nodding as if confirming the truth of Abraham's report. When the little lad said she seemed proud to him she denied it.

No, no. She doubted that she was proud, perhaps shy a little, before so many strangers.

Feverishly, she picked up her distaff and went on with her

work. But five minutes of idleness had she given to the collapse of hope. Her wise, peasant hands twisted out the woollen thread. Her pale face bent over her work.

After evening prayers all others went to bed. Salome's distaff whirled on for an hour, for two hours. She crouched by the hearth to save the cost of a tallow candle. She knew it must be close to midnight, and soon she must stop spinning. She was alone in the kitchen, and alone in the world. The distaff was empty. The thread bobbin was full. She went to the door and opened it. The rain had long stopped. The air, after the heat of the summer day, was fresh as spring water. She picked up a shawl and, pulling it about her, walked out into the drenched and dripping darkness. Forever the rushing of the race. Night and day, the turning of the wheels. The wet grass was higher than her knees. She walked slowly along the willow path that followed the river to Paradise.

Above, the moon struggled through stormy clouds—these clouds hurrying forth at the bidding of God. God, above her in that tempestuous sky, commanding the whirling of the clouds, holding each star in its appointed place. The soft lapping and sucking of the river, God's voice murmuring, telling her of peace and resignation. She herself, was she not too God's instrument? He had made her and set her forth upon this earth to fulfil his will.

"Heavenly Father, grant me only to know your commands and to obey them—even as those clouds above obey, and the water that runs to the sea!"

She felt intensely alive, yet with neither hope nor pain of her own. No personality, only part of this night world, part of the will of God. She did not dare to walk as far as Paradise for fear of waking Fenton's dogs, and the geese as well. In the broken, changing moonlight she saw the buildings, the great

roof, the outline of chimneys, and above it all the wind in the sky, the clouds breaking camp and hurrying forth to do God's will at the ends of the earth. At first she did not recognize the dead and dirty light to the east. It could not be the new day.

Night and day, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter—these things, too, obeyed their Heavenly Maker.

"God's will—not mine—be done!"

23

MR. PARRE, as was his beholden duty, soon rode to Boston to make what peace he might with the guardian of his son's wife, for the whole marriage had been disgracefully come by. Not one line had he received from the tailor—and half he had been fearing a constable with a warrant. This gave him hope that his trip to Boston would be easy.

He returned morose and sullen. He shut himself in his hall and sent a servant to fetch Fenton. Mr. Parre stretched his feet towards the hearth and pointed his sharp beard at the swords set above it. He began without preamble.

"Fenton, as soon as I was come to Cousin Macey's house she told me that evil was spoken of you."

"Yes?"

"She told me that it was said you ran away to Plymouth to get your marriage performed and Governor Prince there waived the banns and married you."

"Yes, so it was."

"And besides she told me—the common gossip of Boston. . . . Never was I so bitterly disappointed in you—I did forgive you that you behaved treacherously towards our good neighbour's girl. . . ." (He could not bring the truth of what he had heard out into the open.)

"But there was no promise between Salome and me, although much talk. And Salome—why she laughs at the whole thing. It seems she never expected to marry me. Even her mother sees there's no possibility of a lawsuit. Salome feels no resentment—why must you?"

"Let that pass, Fenton." Fenton was amazed to see that underneath he was at white heat. "What next I heard of you . . . Fenton—I would to God I had heard you were dead instead. I forgive the slight upon our neighbours—although it is no small thing. But there are deeds so base no man may do and be forgiven. That a son of mine should behave like a beast—worse than a beast, worse than an Indian (for your crime is unknown to them) . . . and yet now it is the common talk of Boston."

Fenton looked at his father, and his face was open and innocent.

"Of what do you accuse me?"

"Let me tell in my own way. It was my cousin who bade me go to Captain Oakes of the *Rachel*. He was on the point of sailing. I found him at the Rope and Star."

"I know that man right well."

"It was his stories that so spread about the town."

"Because, with his consent, I used to meet Bathsheba on his boat? Her uncle, at first sight, forbade me to come to the house. He was cruel to her—hating her even."

"Not that, Fenton. I found Oakes ready to speak to me fairly. He seemed a good and valiant man. He told me to my face what he had told others. He said how, for some weeks, you two trysted on his ship, and three days before your marriage—it was a Wednesday—he saw you leave the *Rachel*, but she stayed on and on. So he himself went aboard to see what was amiss with her. She was sobbing and moaning in great pain

of mind and body. Her clothes were torn and dishevelled. She had a bruise upon her throat. And she told him how she had resisted someone (and who could it be but you?) but at the last had been overcome. I will give you money, Fenton—you must find a new place to live. Take this wife of yours—although 'tis no fault of hers—and be gone."

Fenton's gaunt face flushed slowly. "This thing is not true—I swear to you! I will go to Boston and kill that fellow."

"The *Rachel* sailed yesterday."

"Sir, you must take my word against his. I know not what grudge Oakes may have against me. But I believe he wanted Bathsheba for himself. Yes . . . now, I am sure of this. Bathsheba will tell you how falsely he has lied. With every opportunity to hand, her uncle's garden by night, the secret bowels of the ship by day, never did our loving go beyond kisses and a few paltry embraces."

After a little Mr. Parre went on, seemingly at a new angle.

"If what you say is true—and I admit I know nothing of this Oakes—how, then, do you account for this? I went to see Mr. Holmes. He told me how it was he first found you and Bathsheba together, and why he forbade you the house. It seems he knew from Lieutenant Robinson that you soon were to wed another. If he had guessed it was marriage you were after—oh, he was crazy to get the wench settled! It was a great relief, your taking the penniless thing off his hands. She would sit all day in a maze. He thought it would be harder disposing of her than of his own girls—and surely God's hand shook when he made them!"

Fenton was puzzled. All he could say was, "He has lied to you. Bathsheba has told me over and over how he would not allow her to go about. Either he wished husbands for his own

girls first—or he wished her to stay unwed so he might control her property.”

“Her property! All she ever had was fine duds and furbelows! And her uncle refuses to do anything towards dowering her—this wedding being done behind his back. However, he will write to her stepfather, a Mr. Blake who prints in St. Paul’s Churchyard.”

“Let us not talk of moneys.”

“Listen then, to this—if you are too fine to talk of moneys. Holmes bespoke me privately—he has not blatted forth as did your friend Oakes. It seems she told her cousins—but they did not tell their father immediately, as was their duty—that she was accustomed to meeting you by night in the garden. And one night when she returned to the house, she did not cast the bolt after herself, and you followed her to her bedroom off the kitchen. She told little more, except you got your will of her by a pillow over her head—but they knew she went in deadly fear she was with child. That was why they helped her flit off to Plymouth with you. And she had some falling fits, from out of which she would scream most horribly, and afterwards, cry piteously.”

Fenton shrugged his shoulders. “They also lied.”

His father continued, “You explained in some way Oakes’s machinations. Why should three pious young virgins cook up such a tale? If you never followed her into her chamber?”

“I am utterly amazed . . . but they are so ugly and she so fair. ’Twas some knavish, woman’s trick. I beg you to believe me there is nothing in this tale, either. Bathsheba knows how they hate and envy her. . . . Oh, I neither know nor care! I have Bathsheba—that is enough. I am content to turn farmer—never go again away.”

"Well, Fenton, I will believe you. God knows I wish to." The two men shook hands, and Fenton departed.

24

BUT Fenton could not go back to his own Founder's House. He was utterly stunned. The reason he had given for the Holmes girls' and Oakes's stories had been good enough for his father, but not for himself. He took the path toward Swamp Town. What web was weaving about him? Something of hidden danger, a snare for him. He had always felt it, from the first moment he had met her. But by marriage, in accepting her utterly, he had in a way seemed to have broken himself free, although now he knew that a provocative manner does not always mean a passionate nature. And the two stories were rather alike. He remembered well that Wednesday afternoon, when he had been the first to go and she had been left alone in the cabin. She had been silent and petulant. It was she who had brought up the subject of marriage . . . somewhere she had heard that he was pledged to another. She had not seemed quite herself, hardly might he kiss her. But surely her hair was well arranged and her dress in right array. At last she had ordered him away.

He was loath to believe her a liar. In some ways her frankness and honesty had charmed him. For instance, she had always said it was the Dorset squire who would not wed her—and yet Fenton knew the average lying woman would have set the shoe upon the other foot. She had told him once that her lashes and eyebrows were dark by art and not by nature. Even her avowals of passion were far beyond the honesty of the average woman. But they had been words only.

Before him rose the shaggy bark huts of Swamp Town and

there, coming up from the fish nets, rolled Clara-Wood-Tree, the base-born and the rich. He was puzzled to find that he had walked thus far. Turning back, he went to his own house.

At the moment Salome was hanging out the washing on the currant bushes. Thin she did look and queerly wasted but bright and happy as she waved to him. He resented her continual presence about his house, for now she came to Founder's for daily hire as formerly she had gone to Paradise. It was Bathsheba who had made the arrangement. She had offered Goodwife Blue a penny a week more for her daughter's service than Goody Goad would pay. Salome should have refused. Instead she said she was delighted. Seemingly great friendship had sprung up between the two women. Seemingly Salome doted on her supplanter.

Fenton entered the kitchen, and there at her ease lay Bathsheba reading a book. His sensitive, moccasin-clad feet made no sound on the puncheon floor. He stood a moment, looking down at her, fear in his heart. He went to her side and kneeling took her hands.

"Bathsheba, sweet, there is a thing I must talk to you about."

Her little eyes went sidewise, then met his.

"Yes, Fenton?"

"Now look you, I am not as other men. If this thing I ask you is true, I will never hold childish or unreasonable grudge against you. Tell me this, that day—a Wednesday it was—I left the ship before you. Well, that boat is a lonely place, sweetheart—I am to blame in leaving you there. But tell me this, did some man come and, finding you there thus unprotected and alone . . . ?"

She was ghastly pale. All her beauty seemed wiped away,

leaving nothing but the white skin drawn over the skull, and that livid hair.

"Don't, don't!" she begged.

The man's heart sank, for in spite of his words, he was neither as reasonable nor unchildish as his words promised. With his whole heart, he pitied her—but for him she would never be quite the same. He stroked her hands and hair. And he pitied also that sudden departure of her beauty.

"Be not so ashamed. Be not ashamed. Why, there is no reason for all these tears. And after . . . this man went away . . . Captain Oakes came and found you—so?"

She began eagerly through her sobs, "No, no—after you left me . . . and had told me about some woman—I didn't know then it was just Salome Blue—I lay down in the bunk and wept for misery. I thought by what you said you did not wish to marry me. I felt a horror of being alive—you never could understand—and that something awful was about to happen to me. And it is true . . . I suppose I was a little wild and disordered in my dress. Then—that Oakes came and found me. He thought me your doxy, Fenton—and that one man was as good as another to me. In fact, he said something like that. I screamed and fought. No one heard me, so he overpowered me—I would rather have died first."

Fenton got to his feet, rubbing his chin with his fingers thoughtfully. He looked at the now desperately weeping woman. What she had said was not true. If only she could have accepted the story of the stranger he had made for her. Such things do happen—but not because of men such as Captain Oakes. He remembered words he had heard when he himself was half drunk the night after his first meeting with Bathsheba and he and Oakes had shared a bed. Then the Captain had told him how this fair passenger had sent for him,

again and again. He had mistook her meaning . . . laid a hand upon her, and she had leaped half-naked, into the companion-way. He said rats had frightened her—and something about a parson and a parson's wife. . . .

Bathsheba was hurriedly going on with her story. She had hold of one of his hands and was nervously twisting his fingers. There was colour once more in her face, and her eyes sparkled. Detail after sickening detail, she gave him. It was true that now and then she had to stop and wipe her eyes. Once he interrupted her, "Bathsheba, do you realize that you are making accusations so serious as to hang a man? Take care that you do not perjure yourself."

Her eyes, as it were, stumbled. "Oh, I thought you said he had sailed by now. . . ." She was confused but quickly recovered. "And why should he not hang?"

She looked him straight in the eye. God! Why could she not have spared him those details? And probably it was the same story she had told of him to Oakes. But Oakes had believed Fenton to be a ravisher. Fenton could not believe the same of him. Sick to his very soul, the young man sat beside his bride and heard her out.

At the door was a footstep, bright and light. Salome, coming in to prepare supper. She was all smiles, and in her hand she held a little spray of early scarlet apples to give Bathsheba. Bathsheba turned back to the book that Fenton's coming had interrupted.

"Put them in the pantry," she said coldly. Salome stood for a moment in confusion. She had done something wrong. Fenton stretched out a lazy hand and took the branch.

"What bright little apples! Now, in a month or more, fall will be upon us. And I have hardly realized it was summer yet. . . . Time goes fast with you, Bathsheba."

The wife said nothing but turned the page.

Salome added eagerly, "Time goes fast for everyone, where Bathsheba is."

Bathsheba shut the book angrily. "I wish you would both stop talking about me." She jumped up and ran sobbing into the little, dark back room, slamming the door.

"Oh, Fenton, what could I have said? And the apples, too—did you notice how they displeased her?"

"No, it is with me, I fancy, she is displeased. I doubt if I will ever make much of a husband for any woman. After harvest, I will set out and do some trading with the Indians, if Paul and Totonic will go with me."

"Oh, Fenton . . . you must not go off and leave her. And you have always said that when you married you would build a big addition onto Founder's. Do you think two miserable rooms fit for such a wife as Bathsheba? Of course," and she laughed nervously, "if you had married a plain village body . . . but Bathsheba! Why, I will not *allow* you to go away." Of late Salome had adopted an aunt-like attitude towards her employers, both of whom were older than herself. She seemed to have given up all thought of marriage and referred to herself as an old spinster or thornback. In the old days she had hardly dared say the nose on her face was her own in Fenton's presence. Now she was always telling him to do this and that. "The addition must be started this fall—at least the wood cut for it. Christopher and Bathsheba and I only this morning were drawing out the plans."

"Well, as long as this house will go to Kit when I inherit Paradise, why should not he take charge of the building? I'll pay the bills."

"Oh, my dear! That would make gossip. You don't understand how in a village every little thing is exaggerated. I should

think all that talk about you and me would make you respect the tongue more."

"You have forgiven me then, Salome?"

"Oh, how funny you are! And there is nothing to forgive! And really we are all God's servants. And how could you look at me after you had seen her? Christian humility . . ."

"Jesu!" thought Fenton, "she would have driven me mad in a month. And added cynically, "This other one I'll give three."

Fenton, bold in action, but wary in personal relations, had that afternoon received his first and final shock from Bathsheba. She could satisfy his body and nothing more. Never again might she get through to the gentle side of his nature that, for a little, had been called out by her. Like a deer leaping back into a thicket it was gone.

III

IF Jazan had been asked what had happened in Canaan during the year and eight months since her brother's marriage, she would have answered, "Nothing." The new white hairs in her father's beard, the broadening of the bald spot upon Orde's pate, her own growth into the maturity of sixteen years, all these things were "nothing." True, Tom Pigge had turned up once more. His wife was dead, and his little girls had been taken away from him. In pity Mr. Parre had lifted the sentence of banishment against him. He liked Tom Pigge. But such small events were nothing compared to the brooding storm she noted gathering over Founder's House across the river. For a year, life seemed standing still, waiting for the storm to break. Of this she could speak to no one. She would have said, "Nothing had happened in Canaan."

Fenton Parre had been away more than ever since his marriage, and when he was away, Salome slept with his wife by night. Christopher had every reason to be much about Founder's. Goody Blue gave it out that this was because he was courting Salome. Jazan would have preferred to believe it was because Fenton had (after a year of toying with the matter) asked his brother to build for him the addition to the house.

On a night in April, Jazan lay restless upon the bed in the windowless chamber at Founder's. Goody Blue had an ague and wished her daughter to stay home this night, so Salome had begged Jazan to come over and bear her "sister" company.

"Kit says it never would do to let her spend the night alone. Kit says . . ." Salome was always saying, "Kit says." Ungraciously Jazan agreed to do as asked. Now she lay sleepless.

From the next room she could hear Bathsheba's voice, gentle and contented. Not wild and ringing as often it was in speaking to her husband. Kit's laugh. She liked Bathsheba when she was with Kit better than at any other time. She liked her least when she was with Salome. There was something artificial, almost flirtatious in her captious treatment of poor Salome, and she despised her neighbour that she fawned upon her and talked extravagantly to anyone who would listen (Jazan would not) about the rare qualities and great beauty of the woman who had taken her rightful man from her. But did Salome love her as she protested? Jazan wondered. Salome seemed to her a trapped woman. She had taken the first step when she had refused to be party in a suit against Fenton. She had not wanted to marry him (so she said) and had never expected to. Therefore she felt no jealousy towards her rival. Therefore she must prove it by loving her rival. Therefore she was always extolling her. "Perhaps I am the only one," thought the young girl, "who knows that Salome hates her—in spite of her big words—partly because of them." And she thought how jerky and spinsterish Salome had become of late. How many pewter spoons and wooden trenchers she'd dropped while washing up in the morning. How incessantly she chatted and laughed. The silly fool. Be honest and hate, thought Jazan, from her inexperienced youth. There's some dignity in that. Or did Salome really believe (as she often said) that whatever happened was always for the best?

So she fretted. Christopher. He really saw a side of Bathsheba that did not seem to exist for anybody else. She was simpler with him, more likeable, less vain, and truly was she interested in the books he lent her. She was not provocative and bent on showing herself off as she was with both Fenton and Salome. She was not rude and indifferent as she

was towards Hagar and herself. She was sisterly. On this quieting thought she fell asleep, with the soft music of Christopher's voice reading the *Faerie Queene* in her ears.

It was upon this night Fenton Parre came back. He found Christopher sitting with Bathsheba beside the hearth, and they read together. They stared at him as though he were a ghost—not a man returned to his own home.

Fenton had four Indians with him. The one was Totonic and the others strangers, Tarratines from far north. He bade his wife shake hands with his tawny friends. She seemed afraid but did as bidden. The Indians sat upon their hams, and the low-raftered room was filled with the rank animal smell of their bodies. Outside, Sheepshead, the dog Fenton had taken with him, was whimpering to his mother, Gertrude, as if afraid she might have forgotten him. Gone-away barked at him. Valiant whimpered.

Fenton bade his wife fetch every victual in the house. There was not much, because in his absence Bathsheba commonly went to the kitchen of Paradise and took home only enough for herself and Salome in a bucket. But there was cheese and some pies, cider, rum, two cold boiled eels, and a scandalous amount of mouldy bread. She and Christopher went together to the cellar to fetch the food. Although they exchanged no glance they seemed to cling to each other.

Fenton mostly addressed his brother. He showed no interest in the enlargement of Founder's House, in his absence completed, but was the price of beaver up in Boston? Was the war interfering with shipping to Holland? Had Gervase taken the pelts to Fayrweather and Fayrweather in Boston for sale? Why hadn't Christopher married Salome?

"Kit, if you will marry the girl I'll turn Founder's over to

you now. Not wait until I inherit Paradise. Your one room at Paradise will be enough for Bathsheba and me."

And how had the spring election gone? Was his father well? Had Paul Blue decided whom to marry? And how was Jazan? and Hagar? Were Tobey's children a credit to their sire?

Never before had his brother seemed such a stranger to Christopher. Partly it was his clothes. He wore nothing but a clout and a pair of tattered Indian "drawers," which covers a man's legs and little else. Worst of all, upon his brown and naked chest was a string of wolf's teeth and bear's claws. Always had he worn Indian clothing when he was about Indian work, but never before had he descended to the childish adornment of the savages. His lean body was hard and subtle. His magnificent shoulders glittered in the candlelight. Little Tonic perched upon a joint-stool looked more civilized at the moment than Captain Parre.

Now and then Fenton would glance at his wife, noting her troubled beauty, her delicate, civilized, female shape. He spoke but little to her, but Christopher understood his glances and turned away his aching eyes. Fenton took the porcelain face in his two hands.

"Get you to our bed, Bathsheba, and presently I will join you. For it is months I have been away. . . ."

The woman flushed. The gorging and swilling of the Indians went on.

"Sir, as you know, while you are gone I have had a woman here to sleep with me. Usually Salome but tonight 'tis Jazan. I hardly like to get her up out of bed at such an hour. Would it not do for you to sleep here by the hearth?"

Fenton laughed a little, and those Indians who understood English laughed much. They thought it a good jest that such a leader among themselves as Captain Parre should be told by

his wife to sleep in the kitchen. Fenton turned to a red warrior from hundreds of miles to the north, an evil, one-eyed fellow of great repute.

"Sagamore, is this the welcome your hunters get when they return from months in the woods?"

"No," said the Sagamore in the most outlandish English, "no have woman like him woman. No have. Indian woman like . . ." and he used the simplest word for what Indian women liked. Kit gave an involuntary exclamation of disgust.

"I warrant you Totonic will get a different welcome in his own hut. His two women will tear him to pieces between them."

Jazan did not know that she had dropped off to sleep once more until she found Kit in the bedroom, bending over her. He begged her to get quickly into her clothes and go back to Paradise, for "he" had come home.

She put on bodice and petticoat over her night-rail. She heard Kit breathing and the voices in the next room. It could not be Fenton was drunk in so short a time, but if he was tired enough he cared no more what he might say or do than a drunken man. She did not catch his words but she heard a cry of such impotence and despair from Bathsheba it moved the flesh upon her bones.

"Oh, God that I had died before you thus insulted me!"

Christopher was pushing Jazan through the kitchen, hardly giving her chance to welcome her brother or Totonic. He hurried her across the foot-bridge, his fingers bruising the skin of her arm. She knew that Fenton was behaving shamefully. Christopher had a right to be angry with him. Instead she was angry with Bathsheba.

At Paradise only a yellow cat upon a shelf and a turnspit

dog upon the hearth were still awake. Christopher with a spill lighted a candle.

"Take this and get to your half of the bed with Hagar."

She tried to answer him lightly as grown women answer in times of stress, not with the direct honesty of childhood. "'Tis never half I get from Hagar but a third only."

She could not take the candle from his shaking hand. She saw his white face behind the light.

"Kit . . . my dear Kit. You shall not go back again to-night."

"I will go back. So you think I will leave her there with those drunken savages—and that black beast?"

"Trust Totonic. He will take them to Swamp Town soon." (It was better not to notice that "black beast.") "And Fenton—he is her husband and you know it."

"If he will not treat her with the respect a man should show his wife I will at least care for her as a brother. As I would you, Jazan."

"If you go back to guard Bathsheba I will go to guard you." They heard through the open door the sound of the Indians headed for Swamp Town.

"You see, Totonic has taken them away."

"But that is . . . worse."

"What?"

"Now he is alone with her," Christopher spoke quietly. His hand did not shake, his voice was calm. "Bathsheba has told me . . . a little . . . of how things are between them."

Jazan would like to have pointed out that Bathsheba had good points—her hair, her courage, her quick wits—but truthful she was not. She held her tongue.

"Do not forget he is your brother and she after all but a stranger-woman."

"It is she who seems familiar now. He the stranger. And you know how she has looked forward all this spring to Fenton's return. And the furnishing of the addition. She has talked for months . . . and now this! Did you hear him say—in jest, of course—that if I would marry Salome he would move himself over to Paradise and give me Founder's? He does not care how he disappoints her."

But in the end he quieted a little, and she dared leave him. She did not know how in the wolfish company of Sheepshead, Gone-away, Valiant, and Gertrude he circled the house until with the breaking of the day he feared Salome would come over from the mill and find him there.

2

FROM where she sat with her back against the sun-warmed clapboards of Paradise, Jazan could watch Founder's. The original hut in comparison to the addition looked like an old witch hanging on the arm of a fair virgin. Jazan idly rubbed her hair, which she had washed that morning. There were many other sunny nooks she might have chosen, but since Fenton's return two months before Founder's had fascinated her. She would sit for hours and watch it, and never cross over to it.

She saw a flutter of white among the gooseberry bushes. Salome hanging out dish-towels. The sound of an axe from behind the woodshed. Christopher chopping kindling. She knew Fenton had ridden that morning to Marlborough. Bathsheba's voice calling the dogs to dinner. One by one she saw the brindled, wolfish beasts assemble.

She had no compassion for these people who she felt were caught in a fatal web, but contempt only, as children always feel for the muddled behaviour of their seniors. Her body was

that of a young woman, lithe and delicately wanton, and her mind was quick enough, but no disappointment nor sorrow had as yet taught her the fatalism that is back of all compassion for human weakness.

The air about her was sweet with crushed thyme and June roses. Above her proud head the casements into the hall were open, and she heard Agnes talking with her father. Mrs. Fayrweather, having made a good marriage for herself, was ready to do what she might to help her young sister. It was to this end that, pregnant as she was, she had ridden out from Boston.

"But, father . . . Jonathan has sent out young Mr. Endicott and Captain Saltonstall. Both liked her well enough. Mr. Endicott spoke highly of her shape—although it would seem to me somewhat meagre—and he thought the settlement you are willing to make most generous."

"Jazan sent them home again."

"Why, when I was her age if anyone had sent *me* a Captain Saltonstall . . . Can't you use paternal authority?"

"'Tis our English custom that although a girl may not pick a man for herself yet she has complete veto. I'll not press her. She's a little maid as yet."

"Sixteen—I was married at that age and well started on motherhood."

"Jazan is a different nature. I think she will wait not for well enough but for the best."

"I cannot imagine what her best may be. Forethought Fearing is the only bachelor more highly placed than those Jonathan has approached. . . ."

And suddenly Jazan remembered Forethought Fearing standing bare-headed before his doorway. His silvery hair cropped as close as a city apprentice. She knew it was because

of him she had tenaciously refused to visit Agnes. Nor did she want to be put up for sale in Boston.

Agnes's voice again. "But you have given permission to both Mercuricus English and Seth Bailey, the Younger, to court her. The sons of a village smith and a yeoman! I notice she has not sent *them* home."

"Oh, she'll marry neither of them. All the girls love Mercuricus and obligingly he loves them all. Young Seth has been in love with Mr. Redbank's grand-daughter, Rue, for years. He courts Jazan to oblige his father. Think you my smartest daughter has not the wit to know?"

"But what I doubt in her is her wit . . . 'tis such as she who are always throwing themselves away."

Jazan saw Gervase Blue coming up from the barn-yard. She beckoned to him, put one finger on her lips for silence, and pointed to the window open above her head. They had laughed between them over this talk of her marrying. She wished to share her present eavesdropping with him. The young fellow flung himself on the ground beside her. There was often no need of words between them. Each felt the other as part of their own selves.

"She had the wit to study Latin. Never had you, Agnes."

"Latin! Why should I? Who wants a female Latinist? I had the wit to marry a Fayrweather. Doesn't that take more wit than Latin?"

"Never, you pot-minded spinning-jenny. . . ." And Mr. Parre was off, defending scholarship, deriding domesticity. Jazan laughed to hear him, and Gervase's lips, which so often made too hard a line, softened and curved. He was proud of his master's lashing tongue. The two young people lay close together on the sunny bank of thyme. Jazan's hair was dry.

With a bass-wood comb she began to comb the fine black gauze. "You are not for sale?" Gervase whispered to her.

"No, not I."

Agnes's voice as calm as before her father's angry words came to them clearly.

". . . or this Gervase Blue. A bastard servant."

"That's me," whispered Gervase, and he put out his short square chin as he always did when he felt himself belittled. Mr. Parre's voice they did not catch, but evidently he reminded Agnes of how low born she was on her mother's side.

"I'm glad I am. I got my wit from my mother. Never from the Parres."

"Ay," said the old man. "Your mother . . . she had the wit to marry well and to live in sorrow, Agnes, for that she could never come to love me."

"The point is that this intimacy between Jazan and your servant must cease. Going duck shooting with him before breakfast, playing at draughts of an evening. Hardly does it seem wise to Jonathan and me that they should have been so raised as brother and sister."

"If brother and sister, why fear love between them?"

"They are both at an age when such relationships most often change. And truth to tell, this time I noticed what I never have before. Gervase hangs upon her words and smile. He is one person when she is about and a sulky, sullen enough fellow when she is not."

"Best farm servant I ever had."

"Send him away I tell you! Send him away before it is too late."

"Oh, Agnes, be shut of your fears! Servants do not court their master's daughters. 'Tis against honour. Of Jazan's honour I will not speak over much. But of Gervase there can be

no question. Nor is he a lad of moods and weakness. Never would he entice my innocent girl."

"Perhaps 'your innocent girl' may entice him."

"You are talking of a weaker sort than young Gervase. He understands his position and the duty he owes my family as well or better than do you—even." And he went on to tell how long ago Gervase had been released from service at the mill and taken into the household at Paradise. And at the moment Mr. Parre had looked into the boy's eyes and seen that he was of too high a mind to take easy vengeance upon Goodwife Blue, he had known he was the soul of honour. "If Gervase did come to love his old playmate," he concluded, "he would avoid her. Never seek her out." His words seemed to silence Agnes. It was silent in the hall and an even heavier silence between the eavesdroppers on the thyme bank.

Jazan tossed back her head, coiled the shining hair, and pinned it in place. "I never thought of *that* before," she said casually. Gervase was silent. "What curious ideas people like Agnes have in their heads." Gervase began to tighten the laces of his leggings. The young girl was too much embarrassed to keep quiet, but her voice sounded flat. "'Tis a wonder Agnes does not think Mr. Redbank wants to marry me. He's a widower."

"I almost forgot the calves," Gervase said and got up, but he did not look at her as he spoke nor at his feet as a shame-faced man might do. His eyes, clear as spring water under their tawny lashes, went across the river and fastened upon the far horizon. "I meant to give them some grain before dinner."

"Gervase."

"What is it?" He stood still but did not look at her.

"You are angry. . . ."

"No," he said, and turned and smiled down upon her. His smile was not in him a social habit nor a courtesy, and amusement he expressed with quick grin. It was more of a caress.

He moved quickly towards the barn. Jazan watched his blue smock receding from her, disappearing at last inside the dairy. She stood up; she was alone. She had a realization of her aloneness such as she had never had before.

3

FENTON was in Marlborough for three days for the drilling of the trainband there. It was noon when he came back to Founder's House. Gertrude, the fiercest wolf-dog he ever had had, he found shut up in the parlour. She had whelped recently, and she told him plainly that she had not been properly fed. Maternity seemed a strange thing for Nature to force upon such a brawny creature—part mastiff, part Danish dog, part wolf. Her leathery dugs hung down in an uneven fringe from her powerful scrawny body. She whimpered, and he scratched her brindled head.

Before taking off his beaver hat, he went to the larder (which had once been the bedroom of the Goads) and got out bread and milk for her. Knowing that something was wrong, he left the bitch to lap up the food and paced through the house.

Under a silver candlestick, which Cousin Macey had given him for his bridal, he found a note. He picked it up and saw it was addressed not to himself, but to Salome. He laid off his buff and scarlet, hung his sword on the hooks above the hall hearth, whistling as he moved about. He put on a pair of old drab breeches and a ragged shirt. Then he went out and

fed the chickens. He guessed his wife had left him. And, deeply and unreasonably, he was shocked.

Where had she gone? Back to Tailor Holmes? After all, she was his wife . . . he had been unkind to her . . . she had been unhappy with him . . . but she was his wife—and he was numbed with the knowledge she had gone.

At the mill, Dick told him that Salome was working for Goody Goad that day, at Paradise. But he idled about, chatting with Dick, teasing Hagar's ridiculous little follower, Abraham Blue, promising the Goodwife to buy a needle for her next time he went to Boston.

Slowly he walked back to Paradise, with the letter for Salome in his pocket. The kitchen smelled of strawberries and boiling sugar, for that day the women were making strawberry jam. He stopped to eat some of the hot, sticky stuff. He could hear the sound of Salome's loom from the room off the kitchen, and he went in.

She was weaving coarse hempen stuff for workmen's tongs.

"Salome, I have a letter for you."

She nodded at him brightly and went on with her weaving—suggesting by her attitude that he was a nice child—who was, however, interfering with her important work. The chaff from the hemp coated her face and clothes. Like many admirable housewives, she looked rather dirty.

He pulled out the letter. She did not take it.

"You know, Fenton, I cannot read."

He knew but had forgotten.

"Shall I read it to you, or would you rather it were someone else?"

"Oh, 'tis no secret—I haven't any secrets. I cannot imagine who would write me a letter."

" 'Tis Kit's hand."

"How silly! He is right here in Canaan—why should he write me?"

"I'm not sure he is in Canaan."

"Only yesterday I did see him, and he said naught about a journey."

Fenton was skimming the contents of the letter. "Well, he's gone on a journey—all right."

Bathsheba was gone, and Christopher had gone with her. Salome, agape, studied his face as he studied the letter. "Tell Fenton we do not go as lovers. . . ." How else in the devil's name do men and women travel about together? "I am only helping her to escape from a situation which is intolerable to one of her sensibility. She knows Fenton cares for her no more . . . he has always—even before marriage—been cruel and abusive to her. . . ." So she had told him the same sort of stories she had told Oakes and her cousins.

That flaming hair that had lain so many nights upon his pillow . . . that willowy body . . . the long, outstretched white neck . . . breasts like white rose petals . . . the porcelain face—the fanciful exaggerations of the truth, and the next moment truth itself, bald and ugly—all her vague yearnings and not so vague despairs—all that was Bathsheba, was gone. What he felt, he himself could not have said. He knew her through and through, and in his heart despised her. But she was the fairest woman he had ever seen. Certainly there was something of injured pride. She was his wife, and he saw now that this fact did have some weight upon the conscience . . . upon the heart—he hardly knew where he felt the pressure—but it was there. He remembered how he had first seen her, lying upon her pallet, the moment before she raised her face to him.

He went over the letter again, but reading no word of it to

the waiting Salome. So Bathsheba wished to leave her thanks to her dear Salome. And Christopher promised that he himself would return, but Bathsheba—never.

"Fenton, you said it was *my* letter. Are you going to read it to me?"

"There is not much. They are gone together."

"They? Who?"

"Kit and my wife."

"But where, Fenton—where? When are they coming back? Why did they go?"

"I read between the lines. Christopher will put her on a boat for England, for he says he will come back but she never. God knows she was unhappy here. Oh, let her go." He flung the letter down upon Salome's web. The color had left Salome's face. Incredibly, her eyes began to start in her head.

"Stop them! You must stop them! Do not let them ruin themselves. You are to blame—you, you, you! I could hate you for this. Why . . . it will be called adultery! They could be hanged—"

"Well, Christopher writes they do not go as lovers. . . ."

"But he does love her! He has—for a year now."

"And Bathsheba?"

"Not at first, but—she did want sympathy and love and understanding. Everything you never gave her. And the last month—you drove her crazy—sitting in the evening alone in the kitchen, never using her beautiful new parlour." She broke into ungainly sobbing. "You will ride after them?"

"Don't be such a fool—I have no idea of going after them."

"Not even to spare them the gallows? For God's sake! I never asked a favour for myself, and you used me cruelly, Fenton. When you married Bathsheba it was exactly as if I

had died. I have been dead ever since. I never reproached you—so now you must go after them.”

He almost hated her for her emotional display. He answered coldly, “Which way shall I ride? I doubt if they go to Boston, they are too well known there.” He saw her face grow stupid. “What shall I do—notify the seaports that a married woman has run off with her husband’s brother?”

“No. I hoped we might keep it private.”

“I will not make it public, I assure you.”

“You drove her to this—just as you drove me . . . you drove me . . .” She was almost howling with her unlovely tears.

He turned on his heel and left her to peer hopelessly through her tears at the writing she could not read.

It was her small brother, Abraham—a clever scholar of Christopher Parre—who read the whole thing out to her in his piping voice. He was horrified at the sinfulness of his schoolmaster. He and Hagar got together to pray for them, and that the Indians might butcher them before they might be guilty of the almost incestuous sin of adultery between a man and his brother’s wife.

It was in vain that Mr. Parre made little of the event in words. His face showed how seriously he was taking the matter. And what was adultery anyway? he protested unwisely. Fenton had the sense not to want this troublesome creature, and for God’s sake, why shouldn’t Christopher have her—if he was such a fool? Anyway—why all this talk about adultery? He himself believed that they had gone in innocence—Christopher was such a fool. So his words contradicted themselves—but they were always wrong, and he took no action.

Then, behind his back, Colonel Coffin and the Baileys and certain others who disliked Mr. Parre’s easy ways got together.

They wrote to the Governor, begging him to apprehend the criminals. It was said, they wrote, that the couple was like to make for a seaport. Let these seaports be notified.

4

"BATHSHEBA PARRE, wife of Captain Fenton Parre, we charge you that, forgetting God and the duty you owe to Him and the duty you owe to your husband, and being foully tempted by the Devil, you left your husband's house with one Mr. Christopher Parre; and having thus now been gone forth five days, we charge adultery has been committed, and order the seizing of your body that you do be held for the next sitting of the Court of Assistants."

"Christopher Parre, we charge you that, forgetting God and the duty you owe to Him and the duty you owe to your brother, Captain Fenton Parre, you seduced and took from under your brother's roof, his wife, Bathsheba Parre. And having gone forth five days together, we charge you held on the charge of adultery, and order the seizing of your body that you may be held until the next sitting of the Court of Assistants."

5

THERE were some not displeased to see the high-handed Captain Parre wear the horns of the cuckold. For himself, he seemed to feel no disgrace. He kept his mouth shut and lived alone in the house his wife had abandoned, and faithfully he fed the chickens and cared for Gertrude and her blind puppies. He had immediately decided that the culprits would try to reach Providence, because he knew Bathsheba's mother had

a nautical cousin, soon due at that port. Now there were several ways to get to Providence, but Fenton believed they would pick up the head waters of the Blackstone River and paddle down-stream to the sea. He and Kit had once done this as boys. Kit would know something of the route (which would be hard to lose), and they would have the completest privacy.

Unknown to anyone he wrote them a letter commanding them to return and suggesting ways the matter might be hushed up, and he promised Bathsheba that if she wished to return to England he would arrange it and in time divorce her, but for the present they must both return to Canaan. This letter he gave to Totonic and bade him look for them along the Blackstone River.

At the end of a week King Pint Pot stood before him.

"You gave them my letter?"

"Kit would not read. He tore it up."

"Where have they gone?"

"As you guessed. To Marlborough and beyond. And to Lake Quinsigamond in the heart of the Nipmuc country. They changed their horse for a canoe, corn-meal, jerked deer meat, and skins to sleep under, and now on that river the white men call the Blackstone they go ever south."

"You saw them go?"

"I saw them go."

"Look you, Totonic, we be old friends. In what mood did they go?"

"They seemed happy and playful. By night he slept on one side of the fire and she upon the other."

It might be true—what Christopher had promised. They did not go as lovers; as their father said, he was such a fool! But 'twould be hard to prove in court.

"Our Governor has already sent word and a warrant to Roger Williams in Providence. They will be held there. Would God they might escape! And, Totonic, I hear that your Weeta-moe, as you call her, has been brought to bed of a son." Johnny's first child had died.

"It is true."

"God give you joy of your children—and your wives. You can manage two better than I can one."

He went to a chest where Bathsheba kept duds for her back. She had taken nothing with her. He pulled out the first dress his hand touched upon. It was a peach-coloured silk, with copper bow-knots. In this dress he had first seen her.

"Take this, as a present to your wife. And here is a coin for your small son. And how is Moon Goes? Is she in health?"

"Yes, good health."

"If King Philip makes more and bigger trouble in Plymouth Colony, will you Nipmucs stand by us—or will you join with him?"

"Nipmucs do not like Wampanoags."

"Do you like white men?"

"No, brother."

Fenton laughed. "You might tell your Nipmucs when you visit among them, and they you, that we will stand but little more nonsense from King Philip. We are trained, armed, and fortified. Fighting man for fighting man, we are better than you Indians."

Totonic looked at him with bright animal scrutiny. "You Indians"—it was not thus Fenton had referred to them before he had become so enmeshed in military affairs. Then it was almost, "We Indians."

Fenton said the Indians were incapable of forgetting old jealousies and joining together. Nor had they the cold ferocity

of the white man, who can spend years in preparation and hold, over long periods, a whole nation at fighting pitch. Indian warfare was little more than a hunting expedition and carried on in the same spirit. But Fenton painted a fine picture for Totonic to ponder on, of how seriously Englishmen have always taken their bloodshed.

"Did you ever see this King Philip?" he asked in Algonquin.

"Never. Nor from what I have heard of him does he sound like a great leader. He is not famed for his valour nor his wisdom, but only for his quarrels and his broken hand. It is that the Wampanoags are more shut in than any of the rest of us. Where the shoe is tightest, there the corn will come." Fenton laughed at him. What did Totonic know of corns? Totonic admitted it was an expression he had once heard Deacon Bailey use. So for a moment they laughed together.

But at the end, as they stood side by side in front of the kitchen door, Totonic looked a woful small figure beside his towering milk-brother. Unconsciously each had assumed the same attitude, the arms folded upon the chest, and this made the difference in their size even more apparent. Bathsheba's delicate London gown was laid across Totonic's neck like a yoke. What joy this would be to Johnny! Yet, as Totonic took the path to Swamp Town, his heart was sad.

6

FENTON went quietly about his work for two weeks, cooking his own food and living alone at Founder's House. At the end of this time, a man on a lathered horse drew up beside him. It was Lieutenant Chickley, who was also a sheriff. In the name of God and the Bay Colony, Fenton was ordered to come to Boston immediately, to bear testimony against

the adulterous conduct of his wife and brother. Fenton leaned upon his scythe.

"Where were they found, Chickley?"

"Near Providence, Young Parre. And no happy lovers did they look to Roger Williams. She with the poison ivy—and he with one thing and another."

"'Tis shameful then, they must be punished for a jaunt they could not enjoy. Did they confess to adultery?"

"She did—quickly enough. 'Tis sad business, Captain Parre. We are all sorry."

"Oh, to Hell with everybody. Chickley, will you go over to Paradise and order my stone-horse saddled? I'll pack my duds and shift my clothes."

Back of the market-place and the Town House, the old First Church and the burying-ground, was the gaol. It was a gloomy, massive, ancient pile, reached by a dirty alley. Prison Lane. Here, in winter, prisoners shivered in dungeon cells, with only a poisonous charcoal brazier to warm them. In summer, the heat and stench were intolerable. As soon as Fenton entered the alley, he smelled the sinister smell. First, he would go to Bathsheba.

By great luck she was alone in her cell. He entered, with his broad hat pulled a little rakishly down upon his forehead. He stood and looked at her and did not speak. She sat upon a miserable straw pallet, burdened with chains heavier than a lusty young pirate should have been asked to bear. The gaoler's wife had given her an old gown of her own to wear, for the one in which she had left Canaan had been in rags. This dress was of the coarsest blue fustian. There was now no dainty white cross-cloth, or modesty piece, about her neck. The austerity of her garb gave her a new and tragic beauty. He noticed that her eyebrows, which he had only seen

dark and slender, had lapsed into a delicate reddish fuzz. Her face already looked cut from a tallow candle, although she had lain here but four nights only.

"Bathsheba," he said gently.

She looked at him as if she had never seen his face before.

"So you came," she said bitterly, "at last." He did not argue with her that he had come as soon as might be, and many men would not have come at all. "What will you do to me, Fenton?"

"That's hardly the point. What will the Court of Assistants do to you?"

He saw a paroxysm of fear cross her face.

"Mr. Fearing, the younger one . . . *he* came yesterday. Fenton, did you know that I may be hanged for this?"

"So runs the law. But I have never heard of but one case where the punishment was so extreme—and that long ago. You may be branded. You may be ordered to wear a scarlet *A* for the rest of your life. And you may get off with a public reprimand, a whipping, and a fine—which the betrayed husband usually pays." He grinned slightly.

"Mr. Fearing said I would hang."

"He would. You may be acquitted. By making death a possible penalty, the Bay Colony defeats its own ends. Again and again, jurymen have brought in a verdict of innocent—feeling, as all sensible men must, that the sentence is too heavy."

Her face lightened. "You mean, I may . . . ? Oh, Fenton!" And she burst into tears, rocking herself back and forth, her chains clanking. Then she flung herself on her knees before him, clasping his rigid wrists with her hands. "Fenton . . . Fenton, take me home . . . I love you. I never loved anyone but you. Take me home."

"How can I?" He looked down at her quietly, unmoved either by pity or anger.

"But when 'tis all over . . . then, you will take me home?"

"Then, I hope, Bathsheba, you will continue on your way to London. . . ."

"London! I shall never go to London—there's . . . reason why I cannot."

"So it was a lie, your telling Christopher you wished to be put upon the ship at Providence?"

"Yes," she whispered. "I had to—get away. Anywhere. I didn't care what happened. And the woods were lovely, and the nights warm. I thought if I went away for a little, I could collect my thoughts. Christopher told me . . . about the river. He said he and you, as boys . . ."

"Bathsheba, was it the truth you confessed—when you confessed adultery with my brother? You remember how you lied about Captain Oakes, and me as well, before ever we were wed?"

"It is the truth. God help me, the truth!"

"You will never 'collect your thoughts,' and you will never tell the truth," he spoke bitterly, as he looked down sternly at the lovely ravaged face raised to his. But he only half believed her. Kit, he knew, had at first denied there had been any sin between them. The woman had quickly confessed. It would help neither of them now to make denial. "Is it that some demon dwells in you?"

"Mr. Fearing said some devil is in me." She seemed anxious to lay all the blame upon this devil. "And, Fenton, now I feel differently about children. At first, you know, I wished to keep myself free of them—but now . . ."

"Bathsheba, you will never have chance to bear child of mine. I told you that I am through with you."

She started back, looking at him wildly. "But I tell you I have changed my mind."

"And I tell you I have changed my desire."

She began to scream, throwing herself against her chains, tearing her nails against the clay floor. No wild beast in trap ever fought more foolishly against restraint.

He took no step towards her to comfort her, but at last he promised her one thing. Nominally, he would take her back. But he hoped that she would see for herself that the thing for her to do was to return to her stepfather in London.

"The Bay Colony has made no place, Bathsheba, for such women as you, who would err and then step back into respectability. In our King's London, things are different. If adultery was punished by death over there, they would hang the whole court. I will promise to take you back—for this may make the judges lenient to you—but you must not consider this taking back of mine very seriously. I know when I am through."

His coldly spoken words seemed to give her great comfort. Hope sprang into her eyes.

"And another thing I want you to promise me," she said. "I don't want that Forethought Fearing coming to call upon me. He . . . he frightens me. He talks about Hell and damnation. . . . Oh, he frightens me so, I'll go mad. He says he will come every day, until I have properly repented and prepared myself to die. He stands afar off, as though he fears to be contaminated by me. Have I grown ugly?"

He made no answer to her. But he gazed at her with hard dark eyes, spotted like a trout's flank. He was thinking how she had every virtue and every vice. Wanton and sensual in her manner and her conversation, she was actually cold—doubtless far colder than the poor, strait-laced Salome would be for a man she loved. Cowardly at one moment, she had

the courage to live on alone at Founder's House when he had gone away. Truthful enough about a matter of eyebrows, she was the greatest liar he had ever known. Vain as a peacock of her beauty, at other times she took no pride in herself and was almost a slattern. Generous when it was a matter of giving a favourite locket to Salome, she had not the generosity even to wonder what fate might lie ahead for Christopher. Not once had she asked for him. And Fenton was enough of a Puritan to notice that of her sin—if she had sinned—she thought not at all, but only of her punishment.

"When you come again," she asked humbly, "will you not bring me a sweet-smelling spice jar and a cake of soap?"

"I will not come again, but these things will I send to you—and decent food as well."

"Not come again? You would leave me! You won't . . . Oh, God, God! Forethought Fearing . . . he said he would come every day, Fenton. . . ."

He left her, and asked to be taken to his brother's cell.

7

THERE were five others with Christopher. Four of these were common knaves and vagabonds. The fifth was a murderer. These unfortunates were as curious as jackdaws. At the meetings between the brothers they crowded about them. Fenton seemed so quiet and forgiving on his third visit, the murderer dared make horns in his lousy hair with his fingers and whistle like a cuckoo. Captain Parre, without rancour, got up, took him by the throat, throttled him almost to death, flung him into a corner, and went back once more to sit beside his brother.

Never, since the time they had been boys and Fenton had

ruled his younger brother in everything, had they felt so close. They talked of early things, like two old men together. Of how they had been forever running away from Goody Goad and going off with the Indians. Of the first time they had been to the falls of the Merrimac to spear salmon. Of a bear Fenton had killed with an axe. Of how Paul Blue, who had grown to be a man of great valour, had been so timid as a child that he almost upset a canoe with his tremblings. Of the time Christopher had been bitten by a wolf during a wolf baiting. Of the last six years there was less to say, but Christopher did try to explain his famous word battle with the Harvard Overseers and how it was he had come to recant. Fenton did not show much intelligent interest, but he heard him out. So to Christopher he went as often as the turnkey would allow him—but to Bathsheba, only once. So June finished. And it was well into July.

The leading clergymen of the Colony were called into the trial room to advise magistrates and jurors. Lawyers there were none. It was against the statutes for any man to take fee for speaking in court for another. So, much to the tune of Deuteronomy, the trial went on. Christopher had little to say. His earlier heresies were remembered against him.

There was much lee-way in the laws the Bay Colony had framed for herself. But neither of the culprits appealed to the taste of the magistrates.

Christopher stared sullenly, almost impudently, about him—his hands clenched, his lips sealed.

There was much feeling against Bathsheba. She was too ready to lay all the guilt upon her partner. Tailor Holmes testified that this woman was thirty-two years old, not the twenty-six she claimed to be, and ten years the senior of her paramour. And this was held against her. At every point

she twisted and lied. And once she went to pieces and began shrieking at the Fearings, who had inflamed popular sentiment against her. So the trial wore on.

One day as Fenton passed Bathsheba's cell, he met a man of about his own age, entering—Bible in hand. Young Mr. Fearing had come to pray with the woman. Civilly, Fenton stood aside and laid off his beaver hat. The other did not see him. His radiant face, his black silk robe, his delicate bands and slender hands made even the unregenerate Fenton feel respect.

So they encountered each other without a word, these two young men, who had at least one thing in common. Both were products not of the old England but the new. Fenton grimaced slightly. He was not used to being ignored.

8

NOT once had Mr. Parre come to Boston during the trial. Only when word came from Cousin Macey that a much severer sentence than he had ever thought possible had been pronounced, did he call angrily to those about him at Paradise that he was going to Boston to see what *he* could do! It was almost as if he thought he could perform a miracle.

He was confused and surprised to see how great a change two months had wrought in his cousin. She was grim and silent, and looked ten years older.

"You are late, Cousin Jude. 'Tis all over but the branding."

"I tell you there shall be no branding."

"Yet the statute books would have permitted death."

"Oh, ay. I know such laws are put in to frighten folk, never with the idea of enforcing them. The Governor will change

the sentence. What! My boy with an *A* branded upon his forehead? Never! You are utterly mad!"

"'Tis you who are mad, Cousin Jude. From the first, the Court was dead set against the two . . . and I tell you it was those reptiles, those Fearings, who egged them on. And once I was so sunken and blind as to call such men friends! Oh, Jude, awake! 'Tis not only adultery the Court is punishing. 'Tis you as well. Your high-handedness. Sitting out there in Canaan as though you owned the town, and then every so often roaring into Boston about this and that, telling the Governor and his Council what to do. If you had only a humble and contrite heart!"

"Who wants a humble and contrite heart? And haven't I usually got what I roared for?"

"You did . . . from Endicott and Winthrop, but they are dead. 'Tis quite another man sits in the Governor's mansion today. This Bellingham. The other men, they did much as pleased themselves. But not this Bellingham. He will always please the people. And the people, inflamed by the Fearings, want an utter degradation of these two."

"But gentlemen of family and position! Are they to be branded for every little stepping aside? Branded, like runaway slaves?"

"So it seems, Cousin Jude. And all we can do is to accept this punishment. . . ."

"Of course, I know what those judges are after. They fear Christopher may become a heretic preacher. They will crush the cockatrice in the egg. For not Christ himself, nor Paul, could stand up and preach with a red *A* upon the forehead. What ninnies my two lads have proved themselves! Fenton, to marry such a crazed dame, and Christopher . . . !"

"Oh, Jude, you do not half realize the richness and goodness of these two young men."

"I do not! I've come to think they must be bastards, no true sons of mine. They have been wicked and perverse, beyond all reason. I can stand Fenton's doing evil, for he is bad. But Christopher! The good man who does wrong always works more havoc than the bad, for he's had no practice. I've seen it again and again. But the one boy smells as foul to me as the other."

"You will never plead with Governor Bellingham with such black hate in your heart."

"Oh, God knows I do not hate them! I mean, 'tis because I have always loved them, I hate them so. Nay now, Cousin Macey, of your pity, read what is in my heart and forget my words." He bowed his greying head. She placed a hand upon his stiff old shoulders.

"I understand this 'hate' of yours, Cousin Jude. . . . Oh, Jude . . . Jude!"

9

THE meeting between the Governor and Mr. Parre was brief enough. They had known each other for years, and Mr. Parre had always accounted him but a little man. Yet now he went to him with a fear he had never felt for the great Endicott and the greater Winthrop. He was ill at ease. He felt his words lacked weight and, worst of all, for the first time he felt himself to be an old man. His words sounded doddering and senile to his own sharp ear. He had lost his old fiery impressiveness, and he knew it. Bellingham listened to him silently—his eyebrows raised. Because he made no answer, Mr. Parre talked on and on, often repeating himself in his plea for his son. In the midst of this tirade, he suddenly remem-

bered his grandfather, dead for fifty years. Sir Anselm Parre would tell the same story over and over again. It seemed to him in his own words he caught the very accents of that ancient knight. He stopped abruptly. To his own and the Governor's amazement, he found that he was offering to resign his judgeship over Canaan. He had judged Canaan for twenty-seven years.

Bellingham looked at him coldly from his narrow eyes. He felt about in a wallet that lay on the table before him, filled with papers. One he drew forth. It was a petition to his Excellency, the Governor. He handed it to Mr. Parre. In amazement, the tortured man read.

Canaan wished another judge. And signed to this were the names of old friends (and foes), old neighbours. Parson Redbank's name was not there, nor the Miller Blue's. Orde had signed and Colonel Coffin, Dillingham and Hurlingheart, Preserved English, the smith, John Truly, the Elder—once his own servant. William Williams . . . why, the first winter in Canaan, the man had been sick and would have died if Jude had not taken him into his own house. Paul Ovington, Will Partridge, James Tucker. And of course the two Baileys, Seth and Noah. He went over the list again. "My own people have cast me out," he thought. The Governor was looking at him coldly. A mean and hateful eye he had. And those delicate eyebrows! And what carefully tended moustachios and stiletto beard! He said courteously, "I shall not make this petition known, Mr. Parre. But I must suggest, to your private ear, that perhaps your usefulness in Canaan is over. You have, in your way, been a good servant to this Colony. I have heard again and again Winthrop and Endicott say . . ."

"Oh, damn Winthrop and Endicott . . . they are both dead, aren't they? Let them lie in their coffins and rot. . . ." (What

on earth am I saying?) But at least his voice had lost the old man's futility that it had earlier to his ear, when he had pled for Christopher. "The fact, Mr. Governor, is . . . that I have no idea of giving up my office . . . I tell you . . . if at next election I am defeated, that is another matter."

But he was already utterly defeated. That day, before he left the Governor's chamber, he had set his hand to the paper which made him no more judge over Canaan. And he saw that Cousin Macey's words were, in part, right. It was not only his stubborn boy that was to be punished, but himself as well. The Governor quoted with surprising accuracy (considering the number of mouths the words must have gone through) certain careless remarks Mr. Parre had recently made about the comparative harmlessness of Christopher's and Bathsheba's sin. And the Governor had refused in any way to mitigate the sentence against the culprits.

After all, Bellingham was right. Should the man who could not keep order over his own household rule over others? But not Judge Jeffries nor Samuel nor Moses could have kept order in *my* household, he thought, as he plunged through the crowd of housewives and country-folk gathered to barter in the public market. Yet the thought came back to him. . . . If in his youth, during riotous student days, he had better controlled himself, he would have been able to pass on a sterner mettle to his boys. My fault. Not the lads' fault, mine.

Weak and old and utterly alone he was, with a loneliness of spirit youth cannot even guess. Nothing but failure could he see behind him, and death before. It was not God's name that formed upon his lips, but "Elizabeth." His mind turned back to her with an aching homesickness—not to Fidelia, his pretty servant-girl. . . .

But that night, still in the mood to drink deep of his dis-

grace, he wrote to Jazan and Hagar and bade them, taking Gervase Blue with them, be in Boston by the following Thursday and there witness the punishment of their brother and brother's wife.

IO

IT was close to three o'clock on a hot August night, and Forethought Fearing still paced his study, although his father had long before gone to his sweating bed.

Forethought knew that night air, no matter how refreshing, is dangerous, but all his casements were open. To keep his papers from blowing, he had stopped twice and put heavy tomes on top of them. Sometimes he picked up his Bible, but quickly put it down again. This night he had set aside to commune with God, for on the morrow—no, later only this very day—he would address the great mob which would gather upon the Common to witness the branding of Christopher and Bathsheba Parre.

Yet God would not come. In vain, upon his knees he had prayed. But, hollow, the words had mocked him with their falseness, seeming to refuse to lift themselves higher than his ceiling. Something was wrong.

He picked up the carefully prepared lecture that he intended, later that day, to recite. Surely the words were right. That quotation from Deuteronomy, about the stoning of the adulteress. Those fiery lines about an even more fiery Hell. His father had helped with their indicting.

From the beginning, Peter Fearing had turned this affair largely over to his son. It was the younger man who had carried consolation and Hell-fire to the culprits in their cells. It was he who had, on three successive Sabbaths, preached to the congregation of the horrors in this world and the next

that waited for such folk as this (and they, the man and the woman, chained to their guards, had been dragged from their cells to listen). Those three sermons had come bursting from his lips like a holy river. How he had loathed and despised the sinners! His voice, which at times was too gently pitched, had rung out like a trumpet. A woman had miscarried, an old man had been stricken, at hearing those awful words. And his father had been pleased.

All that had been simple, speaking among friends within his own church. But the lecture upon the Common would be (as his father pointed out) a different matter. For among this disordered group would be many of those who had bitterly opposed the Fearing influence. Men who did not believe a man's power to vote should depend on his church membership. Rough folk from the wharves, restless spirits, who—like Mr. Parre—thought the affairs of church and state were too closely intermixed for the best advance of either. And they would not be sitting tidily in pews, the men on their side and the women on theirs—each person where he belonged according to his degree and sex—but milling about, excited at the thought of the cruelty they would see. With his stomach he loathed and despised all those who would gather, and himself as well. Something must be wrong. And God had given him no sign of his approval.

It was not Forethought's habit to write out the exact words that he would say, but on this occasion, influenced by his father, he had done so and committed the matter to memory. Necessarily it was short, as Forethought Fearing's voice was not strong enough to be maintained for long at such great pitch. Already had Harvard College printed the three sermons (taken down by an admirer in shorthand) and this coming lecture. Peter Fearing had seen to it that the pamphlet would

be ready for sale, as soon as the branding was done and before the mob could disperse. The old clergyman had made a small fortune by similar works of his own. He was bound his boy should do as well as himself. It would be Forethought's first printed words.

Still he was filled with doubts, not arising from the mind, but stealing through the veins, poisoning the soul.

"Oh, Heavenly Father, who from my infancy set me aside to be thy holy instrument, grant me some sign that I do as thou wouldst." And he listened. And he heard the first lazy chirping of the birds.

"Oh, Lord God, who holds the sparrow's flight in thy hand, hold me up and strengthen me."

A crisp daybreak wind fluttered the curtains at the casement and whirled like fingers of a thief across his table. It touched his feverish forehead. He lifted his head to receive its comfort.

It was gone, and he looked at his table. His mouth fell open. He could remember how carefully, an hour ago, he had set Wigglesworth's *God's Controversy with New England* upon the sheets of his lecture. It could not be so little a wind had lifted that heavy volume. Yet, flung in scornful disorder about his study floor, were the eight pages he and his father had so cunningly devised.

What power could so filch them away from under the heavy book, cast them in impious confusion? He stared and stared at them.

II

THE cocks began to crow, and the twilight was drawn from the sea like a cloth from the face of a corpse. The sun rode

up, hotter and hotter, burning away the wisps of fog. So it was day.

A drummer, a trumpeter, and a crier, gorgeously dressed in heavy woollen uniforms, went through the streets and alleys, telling all that this was the day upon which certain adulterous folk were to be served due punishment in the name of God and the Bay Colony. All were bidden to the Common to watch the carrying out of justice.

The two young girls, who lay that night at Widow Macey's, heard them. Hot and fitful, they had lain awake for most of the night.

The woman herself had sat the night out in her hall below. She did not dare leave her Cousin Jude alone, and he would not go to bed. At first she had berated him that he was forcing his three daughters to witness the disgrace to both their brothers. It was not the first time Jude had done a thing inexplicable to her. And she told him that she had sold her shop to Merchant Fayrweather. This gave her all the money she would need to start out her new life in Rhode Island, for with Boston she was through. Her house would stand empty for a while, and old Black Dido she would leave behind to care for it.

As the clamour sounded without and they knew the time would come within an hour, Evelyn Macey tried once more to turn her cousin's mind from his determination that Jazan and Hagar should witness the cruel sight. She swore that she herself would not go. And let the maids stay with her. Jazan at least. She was already sick and stricken.

The man said violently, "Let there be no more whoring in my family. Let these young misses learn that the wages of sin are death and of adultery the iron—for that seems to be the rule hereabouts. And Jazan is more in need of such a

lesson, I doubt not, than Hagar. Hagar can stay behind with you, if you wish."

Little Hagar had run down the stairs into the hall. Now she stood looking from father to cousin. Her fair curling hair, her delicate colouring, and the long, loose night-rail made her look an angel.

"To see this pain inflicted will, I pray, sanctify me and cleanse me. And may God cleanse that unfortunate and sinful woman, and my wicked, misguided brother—Amen."

"Cousin Jude, leave that child at home!"

But Hagar explained that she had heard from Dido that young Mr. Fearing was lecturing that morning, "And I will not be denied Mr. Fearing."

Slowly and in holiday mood, in spite of the intolerable heat, men and women began to bear towards the Common. From docks and fish piers, houses, shops, taverns, rope-walks, and breweries, the feet of an idle multitude clattered on the cobbles.

The Widow's household started out at first in well-ordered cavalcade. Jude Parre, sick and weary, leaned upon his cousin's arm—for in the end she could not bear to let him go without her. He kept his chin up and stared about him with the mournful pride of captive hawk. Next, Gervase Blue, tight-lipped and scornful, in the leathern leggings and coarse smock of a farm servant (instead of the Sabbath clothing that would have been more appropriate for the great occasion), stalked frowning, in front of Jazan and Hagar, making room for them through the crowd. Last of all came Dido. She was grimacing and grinning. With her was the bonded boy that did the work once Gervase had done. A starry-eyed and frightened child, who was at least wise enough to be always "open and frank" with his mistress, even if he did thief a little.

Jazan saw many whom she had known in happier days. She turned away her disturbing eyes, and although already suffering from heat drew her dark hood closer about her face. Waves of nausea went over her and she trembled. There came the twitching Tailor Holmes. And behind him, his three ugly daughters clustered about Will Sisley. Will had grown very plump and pink with new found prosperity. One of the three Holmes girls he had married; and already the business was known as Holmes and Sisley. It was not for naught men marry such girls. No one could remember which one was his wife. They all seemed to claim him and on such public occasions clumped about him as though he were their common husband.

Soon they had reached the beginning of the Common and, in the milling about, Gervase and his two young ladies became separated from the others. Jazan saw Captain Oakes, ruddy and dark, looking about him with his small roguish eyes. He was sweating as only dark and ruddy men can sweat. She saw a flash in his eyes and a smile forming in the midst of his beard. She half believed he recognized her. She looked away. In bitterness, she thought how such men as he and Fenton seemed to do as they pleased, work little havoc, and get no punishment. It is the good men who, when they stumble, always cause the most pain and pay the heaviest penalty. Her father had been right about this. She felt a tired and wistful love for Christopher. He had always been gentle and dear to her.

She remembered back to the time she was four or five only, and a horn-book had first been hanged about her neck. It was flat like a paddle, and on it was printed the alphabet for her to learn. She had hated the horn-book and had cried. Kit had taken her to the garden and showed her how to play battledore and shuttlecock with her horn-book. So she had come

to love it and had learned *A*, *B*, and *C* that first morning. Whenever she had learned three more letters, he would reward her by a game of battledore and shuttlecock.

The town herdsman had driven the animals that usually pastured upon the Common as far out as Muddy Brook. Banks of pikemen in corslets and helmets held the crowd in order. A gallows was set up, for upon this grisly eminence the culprits would meet their punishment. Her father . . . would he ever recover his old strength and pride in himself, after this heavy blow to his family name? Would any Parre ever again hold up his head? And Jazan loved her suffering family.

"Jazan." It was Jonathan who called to her. He kissed her and Hagar with damp smacks and shook hands with Gervase. He looked cheerful and proved somewhat talkative, as though determined that it was best to pretend that it was all quite pleasant. He had some very good seats for them. He spoke as though it were the launching of a ship or the mustering of soldiers. But the fat hand that mopped away the sweat from his upper lip was shaking. His smile was fixed and forced. Jazan had shocked him with her stricken look. Even her lips were white. Not only was her usual prettiness gone from her; she actually looked ugly, with twisted mouth, blank eyes, and that depressing black hood flapping about her face. He hummed cheerfully, although a little nervously.

The fair Agnes was enthroned upon a country cart. At her feet lay five dead hens. The horse had been led away. Jonathan helped the younger sisters up over the big wheel.

"Well, my dear, it is hotter even than yesterday. Every ship in the harbour is becalmed."

Agnes was still beautiful, although her body was somewhat swollen by approaching maternity. She had a look of inhuman content. In marriage she had found her chance to enlarge the

scope of her life. Now was she withdrawn into her own security. And her husband she had drawn in with her, and her daughter Fidelia. Both were as closely held within her as was the unborn child. All were a part of her. And why should not she, who had always loved herself so much, love these others who were as much hers as her own smooth white hands? If Jonathan had resisted her she might have shown herself brutal and domineering, but he never had. It was part of Jonathan's strength that he never resisted the inevitable.

Gervase stood leaning against the dirty wheel. His arm was thrown over the side of the cart, so that Jazan could press her knee against it. This much comfort, and only this much, could he offer her. But Agnes, as if resenting the smallest intimacy between her sister and the servant, soon sent him on a fruitless errand. Would he be so good as to look about and see where Mr. Parre and the Widow Macey might be?

"There's small chance to find them, Agnes, but I'll look about me."

So he was gone. Agnes shrugged and said to Jonathan, but for Jazan to hear, "I wish you would tell him that I am no 'Agnes' to him. I am Madam, or I am Mrs. Fayrweather—and when I speak to him he is to pull off his hat."

"He had no hat on, Agnes." Jazan defended him. Now he was gone, she was sure she would be sick.

"Then he might touch his forelock. In Boston even the crudest servants know this much of civility."

Jazan gritted her teeth to control temper and nausea.

Now men on horseback, with halberds and armour over their buff coats, filed out on to the Common between the ranks of the foot-soldiers. And there was the wild, sweet music of the trumpets and the rattle of the drums. Jazan could not see the prisoners, but she knew they were in the midst of this

conclave, stopping now at the gallows' foot. Not far from it, a canopy had been set up, and under this stewed Governor Bellingham, his Council, the Lieutenant-Governor, and certain leading citizens. There was a bright fanfare from the trumpets, and a cry for silence. An officer of the Court, standing at the gallows' foot, chanted out the rhythmic legal phrases which told the reason these people were to be punished. And then, Forethought Fearing came out from under the Governor's canopy and slowly mounted to the scaffold. They had proved themselves her brother's enemies, these Fearings. Jazan's heart pounded with resentment.

There was not a cloud in the sky, not a breath of wind. The flags of the Colony, scarlet with a white square in the corner (but no cross), hung to their staffs. The great, glaring metal bowl of the sky pressed down, closer and closer, on the sweltering city. Even standing still, all were drenched with sweat. No matter how delicate the lady, she had a dewy upper lip and her curls clung to her forehead. No matter how unworldly the clergyman, he stuck to his clothes. Forethought Fearing under his glowing black silk—even he could feel a rivulet springing from between his shoulder blades, trickling down his spine. Those closest to him saw that his lips moved in prayer. His father, roasting under the canopy, noticed that he had no notes with him—only his Bible. Ah, the folly of that! Even if the lecture was committed to memory, he should have taken notes along. It is easy to forget even holy words on so hot a day.

Upon the scaffold, a black figure against the wavering heat, Forethought Fearing stood, and in too low a voice began to read to the crowd. Not a word could Jazan hear, but she was shocked at a frank bawling, "Louder, and it please you, sir." She had never heard a clergyman yelled at like this before.

He paused and, after a moment, proceeded in somewhat forced but carrying tones. He had his Bible open in his hands, reading from the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to John. It was the story of the woman taken in adultery.

"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

He shut the book and paused. The hot sun glittered on his silvery head. There was a hush, ominous as the silence before a storm. And old Peter Fearing, where he sat amongst his fellows close by the Governor's chair (and a purple canopy over all), felt his heart jump, contract, stop—and in anguish take up its work again. This was not the text he and his dear boy had selected and so laboriously prepared a proper lecture upon. And what next? Like the crazed Gadarene swine, he saw his son plunge over a cliff. Actually, was he asking, as his next words seemed to suggest, who amongst them was without sin? Looking straight, as he spoke, to the high seats about the Governor? Pointing out, at such a time, that Christ had

taught that to look upon a woman with adultery in the heart was the same as having sinned? Asking for pity for the culprits? Oh, great Jehovah, save him now! His heart again throbbed, stopped, filled his body with agony, then tittered like a dancer's feet and went on. Through these waves of pain and vertigo, he heard a voice which he knew to be his son's—but flat and far away, without any of that burning fire that marked his great moments. He hesitated, as though he were trying to remember words committed to memory, but his father knew these were not the words he had so studied upon. Weak and foolish words, they seemed. There was a murmur from the crowd. A slight but unmistakable hiss. Forethought turned his modelled head, his face lifted.

"Whom do you hiss?" he cried with ringing passion. "Is it Christ or me?"

"Say, Parson," bawled an intoxicated sailor. "We came here to see them get the branding-iron, not all this conversion."

"You criticize me," cried Forethought, "because I show you but only a little of the heavenly kindness your Master showed while he was on this earth. Do you think, if he were here today, there would be any branding of these wretched folk?"

"Go on with the branding, and . . ."

"I hain't never sinned. I'll cast the first stone if you are too sinful."

"What will the world come to if young people hear lectures like this?"

"Give us the woman first."

Governor Bellingham was on his feet, looking about, with anger on his handsome, supercilious face. Mr. Peter Fearing was drawn together into an S. His corpulent old body found a new suppleness under the agony he endured. Hardly could he hear the commotion that followed his son's words. Blind-

ing, deafening waves of darkness rolled over him. Was this death? Was he dying? But the fat old heart picked up its work once more.

Jazan had thrown back her hood. Her face shone with wonder and tenderness. The way he had lifted his head and said, "Whom do you hiss? Is it Christ or me?" And the lovely words our Saviour had said so long ago, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." It had been unexpected, marvellous—and yet even she knew that the words which followed the reading of the Gospel had been weak and faltering. But what he had *tried* to say diffused her with joy. Hagar was chattering with indignation. It was the sun, she said, that had for the moment addled the good man's brains. Jonathan's eyes narrowed behind fat lids. He looked what he was, a keen merchant, listening to a description of a new line of goods. Can you really sell things like that? Christ's own teachings they may be, but are they profitable? Agnes calmly pushed the five dead hens from her with her foot. They had an unlovely, dead-hen smell. She had not noticed it when first she had mounted into the cart. Perhaps the heat . . .

Bathsheba, clad in black, was upon the scaffold. Her orange hair glowing in the sun. Having seen her in many weak and paltry moods, Jazan was unprepared for the heroic stand she now took. Her step did not falter. She knelt, as the executioner bade her kneel. One man pulled her head back upon a block, holding her by her hair. The second man lifted the iron from the charcoal brazier. The woman's face was turned up towards the metallic sky.

Jazan put her hands over her ears. Why had Gervase deserted her when she needed him most? If only she might feel the touch of his arm against her knee. She waited with shut eyes to hear some hideous scream, more terrible than ever she

had heard before. There was a little murmur of cruel satisfaction from the crowd, a slight "ah"—such as a glutton might emit, wiping the grease of a fat duck from his beard. Jazan opened her eyes. At the foot of the scaffold Fenton waited, holding out his hand to Bathsheba, publicly taking her back. The crowd whistled and catcalled. But the man and woman seemed alike in their cool indifference to the crowd. They were gone.

Jazan had not seen Christopher since he had left Paradise three months ago. Now she covered her face with her hands. She heard Jonathan murmur in pity, "What that poor fellow must have suffered!" Christopher, now, must be ascending the scaffold. Jazan was filled with desperation. The smell of the dead hens, the mob of people, the pouring molten heat of the sun, the terror of the branding-iron. She must escape. She flung herself over the wheel, unnoticed by her companions.

I 2

SHE could not have made her way through the crowd to her cousin's house on High Street if she had wished. Nor was it a roof and city streets that she craved; but trees, grass, solitude, and sky. She headed toward Blackstone's Point, the nearest spot of wild land at hand. The crowd was left behind. Although there were houses, gardens, and domestic creatures, there were no people, for every man, woman, and child had gone to the Common. Chickens picked about doorways. Goats bleated. Cats and dogs lay in shady nooks, flat and prostrated by the heat. Swine roused up to grunt at her. But there was not one person. She came to a spring, cased up with mossy boards, and here she sat down and plunged her hands and

arms into the icy water and splashed it over her face and throat.

Kit's face! Kit's face—quick, and often laughing—branded for life! And Mr. Fearing had said if Christ himself were here this day, there would have been no branding. Who were the people of Boston to set themselves up against Christ himself?

At last she moved on, and over the bars, into Blackstone's orchard, the very spot where, two years before, she had last spoken to Forethought Fearing.

In time the orchard ended and she was in rough blueberry pasture, and they and the bayberries and the sweet fern were waist high. Fragrant they smelled, under that searing sun. Then there was no more fertile land but sand dunes only and grass rough as an animal's pelt. She left behind her the shade of trees, the refreshing chill of the spring. Driven by sorrow and despair, she ploughed through the intense heat which trembled over the dunes. Now she was on the tip of the point, and in every direction except behind her was salt water, and the tide was high. Charlestown and Cambridge could she see from this elevation. The flat, oily water hardly had the courage to make waves. She saw ships becalmed in the Back Bay, and oarsmen painfully rowing their barges of fire-wood and hay across the enchanted water. Like water-spiders, these boats seemed to walk along on their oars. The desolation and loneliness of the spot, the inhuman quality of the intense heat, dimmed for her the terror of the day. And she understood how Christ had loved mankind and knew what it was Forethought Fearing had wished to say.

She lay upon her back in the course, scant pelt which covered the sand. A deformed pine-tree partly shaded her. The white gulls wheeled. She heard their crying. The whistle of the

sandpiper and the laughter of the kittiwake. This far out to sea upon the narrow point there was a breath of air, small but cool. She did not know how long she lay thinking of Bathsheba, of Christopher, of her father, of Forethought Fearing, and of Christ. It was magnificent, what young Mr. Fearing had *tried* to say. But what had he really said? She could not remember. And why was the crowd so angry?

A sound of turned pebbles on the beach below her, close to the water that wearily slapped the coast. She turned over on her belly, propped up her chin on her hands, and looked down. A solitary man, muffled in black, was within three or four yards of her. She thought if she held her breath he would not see her. He seemed utterly lost within himself. But Forethought Fearing raised his eyes and looked into hers. Their heads were almost on a level. She saw the stricken soul of the man pouring out of those eyes.

"So it is *you*, Jazan Parre. And in the flesh this time."

"Yes, Mr. Fearing."

"We have both sought a solitary spot to mourn."

"Why should you mourn? He is not your brother. . . ."

"Is he, or is he not? I do not know. But, for a few hours, I knew that he was. And she was my sister, even that wretched woman." He clenched his right hand and flung it away from him. "My poor father . . . I had to get a chair and bearers to take him home. I almost killed *him*. And the doctor . . . he told me to stay away until nightfall. And my place is with my father, my whole heart is with him, and now . . ."

Jazan put out her hand, sympathy and pity rising in her.

"Come," she said. "Come sit beside me under this pine-tree. There is a little breeze off the Bay." She smiled soberly and said, "We must not mourn alone."

Laboriously, he climbed the sand dune. She had never

noticed before that out of doors (except upon the street) he was a somewhat clumsy man. His tall, elegant body in the world of grass and meadow seemed a little disjointed. He took his black hat off and flung it beside him. She saw the metallic curls, cropped so close to the thin skull. "A head like the head upon a heathen coin," her father had said of him. About his neck, limp and dishevelled, were the sad remains of the fastidious bands with which he had started the day. As unconsciously as though he were alone, he took off these bands, opened his shirt so that some air might come in upon his chest. She was surprised at the almost feminine beauty of the neck and throat. No man in Canaan was so unburned by weather, so exotic in delicate whiteness. He seemed unaware of her, and did not glance at her. His lips were set tightly over the uneven teeth as though he would never speak, but in time he began.

"I had indeed prepared a proper lecture for this day. My father had read it and had approved most heartily. That was a week ago."

"Sir, why was it that you had full charge of this matter of my brother—and not your father?" She had resented this bitterly.

"He said—he has always said—before I can become a proper clergyman, not merely a pulpit preacher, I must learn to handle human beings. He wanted me to try . . . he thought I had done well—only until today. . . . *He* told me everything to say, when I visited them in their cells, when I preached on three different Sabbaths. . . . And it was really *he*, not I, whose words I had got by heart to deliver today. But last night I was determined not to lie unconscious as any swine. I paced my study; I begged God to assure me that I was on the right course—for I was having doubts. I did not know from whence they came. I begged a sign from God."

He paused and pressed his fingers to his cracked, dried lips. "Was it some demon of jealousy that tempted me with dissatisfaction? You see, the words I had prepared were not really *my own*. I did not wish to use those wise and cautious words. I could do better myself, alone. And then such a little thing, a small wind only, and I thought I had received a sign. Our Lord no more than myself was satisfied—and I, well . . . strangely, I fell asleep."

Jazan had no word to throw into the chasm of silence that grew between them. The man's nervous hands tore at the coarse grass. His eyes were fixed to sea. He continued rapidly.

"I dreamed that you came quickly walking towards me. But you were a mere child, far younger than even you were when first I knew you. We met in a sandy land, a golden land, but it was not like the sands here about Boston. I knew we were treading the land our Saviour trod. We were indeed in Galilee. I saw a sad and simple man, in no ways well favoured, but filled with ineffable forgiveness. And he sat upon the ground, and a crowd stood round about. He wrote with his finger upon the ground. I knew that if I could but see the words he wrote. . . ."

Again he pressed his fingers to lips, which rustled slightly, so dry they were. "There was a woman—a woman . . . flushed, confused, ashamed. Your brother's wife. Her red hair coiled about her nakedness. Half clad she was . . . just pulled from her lover's bed. I could see that those who stood about had asked our Lord a question, waited upon his answer. But he wrote upon the ground. At last he said, 'He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone,' and 'Go,' he said, 'and sin no more.' I woke up, and a great passion was on me. I felt the words prepared were false words, so contrary were they to Christ's own love. Our Lord's voice . . . the very

intonation, the sad dropping of the syllables . . . oh, they rang in my ears! Now, now, was it to hand! The words my Saviour said . . . and more important . . . those words he wrote upon the sand. As God lives, I *saw* those words. Then I knew what he, himself, would have said if he had been with us today in Boston. The right words came pouring into my brain. I made no notes. I trusted, when the time came, he would stand beside me. 'Tis often thus with me . . . I preach best when I know least clear what it is I will say. But the time came. . . . Oh, Jazan, you saw how lamentably I failed! I could not speak. Even while I was reading out the Gospel, I was seized with fear that my dream was false, sent, most likely, to tempt my inordinate pride. Think you, if God had sent the dream, he would have abandoned me when my time of trial was upon me?" And at last he turned his grievous face upon her. "And there was something wrong in my dream—one little thing—do you see what it was?"

"No, no. There was nothing wrong. It was a wonderful and holy dream."

"Why," he laughed excitedly, the pedant rising in him, "it was not by the Sea of Galilee Christ spoke those awful words. 'Twas in the Temple of Jerusalem. I had never thought of that until I began to read the Scripture. Then I instantly feared I was wrong. Would God, even in a dream, have misquoted Holy Writ?"

Jazan was huddled together, her arms about her knees. Her face, flushed from excitement, was averted. Suddenly she flung out her arms, shook her fallen hair from her face, and lifted burning eyes to his. It was the first time since he had sat beside her that their eyes had met fully.

"The Lord wished to show you, sir, that his humanity and forgiveness was not limited to the Temple of Jerusalem—it

would have been the same in Galilee, or here, today, in Boston. There was neither time nor geography, only his truth—and that is love and forgiveness.”

“Is that it?”

“So it seems to me. And it did not matter who those people were, nor what they wore. They might have dressed as we are today. . . .”

His cry of amazement interrupted her.

“But I didn’t tell you, did I? They *were* dressed like folk today. Even in my dream, I marvelled. Jazan! You have had the same dream! Jerkin and breeches, beaver hat and Monmouth cap, and every man of them in red knit stockings. Our Lord was arrayed, even as I, in black silk. Oh, Jazan, did you too dream my dream?”

“No, no, I cannot say—and yet . . . as you talked, it seemed as if I too had dreamed, and forgotten . . . ’twas all familiar to me.”

She could see the wastes of sand, so much more golden than the ones around Boston, the red knit stockings, and the Monmouth caps. The haunting memory of a forgotten dream . . . floating back to her and yet not coming wholly to the surface of her mind.

“I can’t remember!” she cried in despair. She felt his hand closing upon her wrist like a vice.

He whispered, “Who are you?”

She thought he had gone mad. “Oh, sir,” she said, “I am Jazan Parre, Jude Parre’s daughter. Oh, you have suffered too much. You are sick. But you know me, Jazan Parre.”

“I know your name, and who your father is. But who are *you*? Jazan, why have you come, often and often, to my dreams? And now today—in the flesh—with your loving belief in me?”

Their faces were not eight inches apart. Unflinchingly, she returned his gaze. Her face, damp with heat, was set with a frown of concentration. Through the dark iris—brown, flecked with yellow, like sunlight on a forest brook—he could gaze down into some unknown depth. He felt if he could but see far enough he would know the secret of the world. Never had he seen such eyes. Naked soul to naked soul, their eyes met in an intimacy as great as naked body pressed to naked body. To both of them, the day had been beyond all endurance. The young girl was shaken by some new emotion.

He said in a choking voice, "God will send you to me again, Jazan Parre, in the flesh or in my dreaming."

Instantly, he relinquished her hand, turned, and was gone. The white marks where he had gripped her slowly turned red. She felt as if she had given something of herself that never could she take back again.

That dream they had both had (for now she was sure she could remember those wastes of golden sand and the men's legs in their red knit stockings). . . . And it was she who had led him into the presence of our Lord!

At last Gervase found her. She was sitting quietly by old Blackstone's spring, washing her face and arms in the water and coaxing the ducklings. She seemed exhausted, but content. The quiet eyes she raised to him were uncanny and inhuman. He was afraid for her. They made him think of the eyes of mortal maids that fairies tempt away, and when they do come back once more to their own roof-trees, never again are they the same.

I 3

AN outcome of the branding was Christopher's marriage to Salome Blue. This was done with no more than half-hearted

consent from the young people. Neither seemed, at the moment, to care what became of them, so their fathers decided for them. The banns were waived, and the new judge, Colonel Coffin, registered their vows three days after the return from Boston.

Goody Blue had at last the satisfaction of seeing her daughter married to a Parre and set up as mistress at Founder's—fine addition and all. Fenton had sworn he would not live there longer with his wife, who henceforth was to bide at Paradise.

Salome went bravely to work setting all things in order. She was up at dawn, scouring and polishing, mending, spinning, baking and brewing, knitting, weaving, and washing. She made poultices for her husband's forehead, so that it healed neatly. She nursed the sick mind that had been handed over to her care. Unloved, and all but unwanted, she clung to him, and she saved him from almost certain despair. But sometimes, as her young husband slept by her side, she was filled with anguish at the position in which she now found herself. Pathetically, she loved him. She could not endure to see that he thought only of Bathsheba. She had asked no promise of him, but he had told her that never again, as far as he was able, would he speak to this woman he believed he had so harmed. Every day he asked his wife concerning her.

Salome, who once had been so voluble to his questions, now answered him meagrely. Yes, Bathsheba had been in a great taking when Fenton had gone away to lay out the new road beyond Ipswich for the General Court.

Yes, Fenton had kissed her good-bye.

No, her scar was not well healed. No, she did not think Goody Goad was putting a corrosive in the dressing.

Hagar was offended to have her and her disgrace about. Jazan was kinder to her than formerly.

No, she did not think this was because Jazan was learning to love her. It was compassion only.

She did not think Bathsheba's forehead was so slow a-healing because she had such a delicate skin. She thought . . . But she did not finish her thought. Everyone in Canaan believed that the difference in the mending of the man's and woman's brand was God's way of showing who was the guiltier of the two.

Of course, it was a heavy blow to his father. And being asked to resign as Judge . . . that was a heavy blow. True, he seemed sad and moping. He ate badly, it was true. And played softly upon the flute.

Every direct question she answered patiently, but for his vague words of love for another woman she had no answer. She never criticized Bathsheba but now she knew she hated her. Hate was a new emotion for this kindly woman. She had no words in which to express it, although love and admiration she could express with a tedious nicety. By night she prayed for strength to endure but one day more, and with the new day strength always came. Smiling a little inanely, she went about her work—but her face had a corroded look, as if the tears she shed by night were wearing it away.

Christopher, in his shame, would go nowhere; not even to Paradise, or to meeting, although Colonel Coffin fined him for absence from Sabbath service. At the end of six months, Salome was almost in despair over him, for now that he had become hers, she wanted nothing more than his happiness. He seemed to live yet in a tired maze, but the colour was coming back to his cheeks and his hair had lost the hempen look it had when first he had left the gaol. She saw that with the Indians he felt self-confident. The Indians saw no shame in that purple A. Probably they admired it. That winter she devised errands for

him that would take him to Swamp Town. In confidence, she begged Totonic to come to them often.

One evening she questioned Totonic about his own language, and a discussion began between Christopher and the young sachem about the formation of plurals. Christopher became animated. Salome, as if knowing that she had done her work, stole quietly into the kitchen to set split peas to soak.

In his Harvard days, in spite of the conversations he often had with Mr. Eliot as the *Upbiblum God* had been going through the press, he had scorned anything so barbarous as the native tongues. Now he seized upon them. His days, that had been empty, suddenly were full. He worked with the help of his Swamp Town friends on the Algonquin tongue. His system of reducing it to writing must be compared to Mr. Eliot's. In May, the kind old Roxbury missionary to the Indians rode out to call upon him. He told amusing mistakes he had made in his own early translations. The two men laughed heartily together. For the first time in ten months, Christopher seemed himself. He had ruffed up his hair, forgetting the scar his hand ran over. He had his pipe in one hand and a tankard of ale in the other. How handsome, vigorous and young, he looked! And his nose was pointing with interest. But Salome's heart smote her and she stole away, unnoticed, to her bed.

She had reason to be thankful for that night, for she was sure she conceived. With that genius for the ridiculous that some of the most praiseworthy people have, she immediately told her great news to everyone; from Goody Goad, who in time would be her midwife, to Orde, the taverner, who had grown so deaf she had to shout her glad tidings (and the horse-boy and the neighbouring smith, Preserved English, and his son, Mercuricus, and the serving-maids, all tittering). Christopher felt ashamed. He brutally told her she was to talk

no more of this matter. It made him feel ridiculous that child of his might come to maturity in that lean, unloved body. Jesu! Who but Salome would go so instantly with child! It seemed to him that she was so crazy for children—in some way so full of them—you had to give her but the least excuse, and here they came! In those dark days, everything but the Algonquin language irritated him.

But this time Salome was wrong. She did not conceive for some months later. All this stir had been (so Goody Goad told her) wind and the vapours only.

Through his irritations and his yearnings for Bathsheba, there was but one security in Christopher's life, one reality, and that was his wife. When she begged him, he began going to meeting. To please her, they went to call on Parson Redbank. He took her on a pillion to Sudbury once.

It was Paradise where he was most loath to go. His father's eyes, Bathsheba's eyes—these he could not meet. But even there she got him to go. And when he covertly glanced at Bathsheba, she would turn away her face.

Bathsheba seemed to have no idea that Salome's feelings had changed towards her—or perhaps what she had always felt had now come to the top.

She was still fair enough, but she looked her thirty-three years. As long as everyone thought her eight years younger than she was, she had been eight years younger. With the common knowledge of her true age, she seemed to age to meet it. Her hair she cut about her forehead so that it almost covered the ugly mark, which the executioner had, with some kindness, placed high. But when the locks blew aside, it was a shocking thing to see. The scar had puckered and seemed to draw the whole forehead into its whirlpool.

To the horror of Goody Goad and Hagar, Bathsheba took

it for granted that now, as wife of the absent eldest son, she was mistress of Paradise. On Sabbath, she entered the women's pew first. She sat herself next to Mr. Parre at the head of the table. When visitors came, she made them welcome and ordered food and drink. Her brand and her history were embarrassing to many, and they tried to ignore her. She would not be ignored. With her handsome clothes and condescending manner she seemed to insist that not only did she exist but was due respect. Both Mr. Parre and Jazan felt a grudging admiration for her gallantness in the face of such disgrace. She might be untruthful, unchaste, moody, vain, and idle, but she had grit.

Fenton came and went, and came again. He and his wife treated each other with studied courtesy, like stately folk moving through a gavotte. Each time after he was gone, Bathsheba would have days and nights of tears and terror. Sometimes all day long she would not bother to dress herself, but go about in slippers, a whittle pulled over her night-rail, pacing the house, moaning and wordless. Sometimes, after having seen Fenton, she would be gone all day to the wildwood, and no one knew what it was she did there.

14

THE year after the branding, Goody Goad was beside herself to find a proper female servant. Soon harvest would be upon them, and when this was over Bessie Thirst—whom Goody Goad said she never had seen, in the ten years she had worked at Paradise, either drunk or sober—was to be married to a journeyman tinker.

One day in bright September, Jazan was sitting under Yellow Clay's oak, weaving coloured garters on a knee-loom she held between her knees. She heard the dogs bark, the gate

open, and turned to see who had come. It was Gervase Blue. He had gone that day to Sudbury to collect a ram that had been promised Paradise in exchange for so much English corn. The ram he had not, but proudly astride his saddle was a big, smiling girl. Gervase walked beside the horse. He walked as though bringing home a prize. Jazan's mind went back to that other day, so long ago. She had sat beneath this same old oak and had seen another man bring home his woman; the rolling storm, the flying stallion, Fenton's broad shoulders and scarlet cape—and Bathsheba upon the pillion.

A very parody of that romantic entrance did the placid arrival of Gervase and the stout girl seem. But Jazan knew that when Gervase should bring home the woman of his choice, it would be the end of something for her. She was half afraid when she went, at last, into the kitchen; afraid the servant would be announcing his wife. He was nineteen now. Why should he not marry if he wished? Jazan's nails bit her palms.

"I had heard, ma'am, where I was—over in Marlborough—that you was looking out for a female servant, and so I put my aprons in this bundle and set out to walk over and see if I'd suit," the young woman was saying. Even Goody Goad looked impressed with her energy.

"You planned to walk all the way?"

"Yes, ma'am, and then *him* overtook me in Sudbury, and says I could ride his horse and he'd walk." A roguish look came into her small eyes, "And so here we are," she announced.

"Dear me, I must think things over. But at least you may spend the night. How old are you? I had someone older in mind. . . ."

"Sixteen, ma'am, but I'm very strong. Do you see that chest there? I can pick it up." Full of linen as it was; she grasped

it and lifted it a foot off the floor. Then stood back, panting. "I can do anything," she admitted.

The Goodwife pursed her lips, shook her head-cloth, and jingled her keys. "I doubt that," she said severely; but she had known, the second Gervase brought Phoebe Bemis to her, that this was the one she was seeking.

"And tomorrow I'll go away right after breakfast if you decide you don't like me."

But by tomorrow it was plain that Phoebe had come to stay. She was a good-natured, honest wench, full bosomed and quick to sweat. She loved everybody, and soon became an important member of the household—which, without her, would have seemed a little downcast. Bathsheba liked her and always called for her to lace up her stays or brew the costly chocolate, an affectation she had picked up in London. Occasionally Hagar would sit the obliging creature upon a stool and read to her from the Bible. Phoebe loved this, and never questioned her commentaries. Jazan liked to take her into the woods when she gathered candle-wood or oak leaves for baking bread, flag-root and herbs for Goody Goad's medicines. It was always Phoebe who saw when Gervase came in from his work too late for the general meal, and immediately there was something hot and appetizing set out on the kitchen table.

Phoebe enjoyed everything and everybody. She was no beauty, and her skin was a little coarse and greyish. Immediately she started a number of slightly comic flirtations, for she had a ready laugh and unbounded affection. Sometimes it did seem like having a large, loving dog drooling all over you.

She flirted with young Jack Truly and even old Goodman Goad. She flirted with Christopher and Mr. Parre. She laughed at Mercuricus English until she had to throw her apron over her face to cover the tears that ran down her cheeks. She flirted

with all the Blue boys, from Paul, who was betrothed to Priscilla Hurlingheart, to meagre Abraham. Wherever she went, she was followed by jokes and laughter. Yet any but the dullest man must know that she was a good girl. She was so banal with everyone that no one could take her attentions seriously.

Goody Goad was well content. She knew that she would, with years, outgrow her frolicking and become a worthy successor to herself. Already Gervase was quietly taking over the work of the ancient steward. Now Phoebe would in time take Goody Goad's place. Quite as obviously, in time these two should marry, and Paradise would continue through the next generation the great estate it had always been. It may have been she put the idea into Phoebe's head, for the girl had been at Paradise but a month when she announced she was going to marry Gervase Blue. The other servants laughed. Let her try! Gervase was known to be unapproachable to women; and those who knew him best believed that it was Jazan Parre who, although she never might marry him herself, was keeping him back.

So Phoebe told everyone, including the man of her choice, that in a year she would marry Gervase Blue. It became at once a prime joke and an accepted fact. Jazan, sitting in the hall with Hagar and Bathsheba, would hear the hearty laughter when Gervase came into the kitchen.

"You watch out now, Master Gervase. I've said I'm going to marry you, and I do what I say." And amazingly, in some of her exuberant fits, she would fling down her work and chase him about the kitchen. If she caught him, she was going to put him in a basket and carry him over to the magistrate's and marry him. Gervase, no matter how tired he was when he came in, would enter good-naturedly into this game, which seemed unlike his own nature. Off would he skip, with the

cheerful wench in hot pursuit. Stools and forms would be upset, and cats were stepped on. Mr. Parre came out of the great chamber where he spent much time, and laughed to see them. The Goodwife, in spite of the strict discipline she usually kept, could not find words to reprove the lively and overgrown child. It seemed to her that Gervase would be fortunate indeed with such a wife. His own temperament was too remote and controlled. Phoebe made him more what he should be.

This frank pursuit of Gervase by Phoebe and all the talk it caused had its effect upon Jazan. She saw that to everyone, except herself only, it seemed a proper match. She believed she could love no one but Gervase and that she never might love him. The worst of the matter was that it was he who would not have it. How well her father had understood the difference between the shameless, reckless blood of the Parres and the pride of the nameless servant! Both Fenton and Christopher had proved how headstrong they were in love. And her father as well by the disgrace of his second marriage. Given a chance she too would have proved the same. The happy chance was not hers. Gervase saw to that.

At times Jazan showed a sad and simple dignity, fitting to a woman hopelessly in love. But at times she was feckless and wild. In these moods she turned to Mercuricus English, the smith's son. The volatile little man was strong as though forged on his own anvil and a light-hearted lover, for he loved no one person—only love. He taught the young girl the cynical truth that kisses and embraces from the wrong man (as he knew himself to be) are better than none at all. But no one seeing her innocent bland little face would guess that any man had taught her anything.

15

IN the fall of '68 the General Court once more found reason to send a delegation to King Charles II, answering certain charges of disloyalty brought against this most troublesome of colonies. Four eminent men, no longer young—who it was felt could pull the wool over the King's eyes and carry on the old policy of delay—were quickly selected. For the fifth, they considered once more sending old Peter Fearing. No man among them had a more dominating personality.

Mr. Fearing appeared to the Governor. He said of late his health had been so grievous he doubted he had strength for the journey, but surely if they bade him go, go he would. Then he pointed out to them a thing they had not thought on before. The four men already selected were old like himself. Like himself, they were English born and bred. And this was true of most of the delegations the Bay had sent to London. Would it not be well that a young man, utterly indigenous to this new land, be sent to his Majesty to show the type of manhood the Colony could breed?

"We have sent samples of our timber and cider, fish, cattle, and flax, grains and pipe staves; but of our greatest crop, the human crop, we have sent little enough. I think to include in the delegation a fine and notable example of our home-grown manhood would be wise."

It was in this way he asked that Forethought be sent instead. His poor lad had not been himself of late. The Governor and the Council knew what the old man had in mind.

After his departure they discussed the matter a little and, on the whole, agreed with Mr. Fearing. It was almost decided that Forethought should go instead of his father. Bellingham suggested another name.

"Why not Captain Parre?"

All saw the wisdom of the suggestion. The four greybeards would pull the wool. The young man would be such an exhibit as they were shrewd enough to see would impress their king. It would give a subtle suggestion that the Colony had plenty of young fighting men, was not inhabited merely by theologians. The King (in his present mood) must realize the military arts were not neglected in his profitless overseas possession. Young Parre was doubtless the very man. He would be welcomed in military circles and would come back a more valuable officer. The Council agreed with the Governor when he insisted there was no young man with more aristocratic manner than this same Young Parre. This would have surprised the Canaanites, who had too often seen him lolling about with bare chest and in Indian drawers. It was Bellingham who swung the decision. In spite of his cold eyes and supercilious manner, he had never forgotten Jude Parre's face at the time, a year and more ago, that he had lost his judgeship through the wickedness of one of his own sons. He was glad to bestow this honour upon the other son, partly to please the old gentleman. It was not until mid-winter they would sail.

But Peter Fearing, when they told him, was filled with an ungodly wrath. He cried upon God to witness the destruction of his "New Jerusalem," the apostasy of the Governor and his Council. He would not listen to the explanations made to him. He only knew that his dear boy, his Forethought, had been set at naught. Of greater merit, as a sample of the manhood the Colony could produce, was that "wild hyena" from Canaan!

Forethought (who had been told by his father that he was to be sent and was looking forward to this visit to the homeland of his parents) took the news gently, trying to soothe the old man so he would not fall again into one of his painful heart

attacks. He himself thought he saw the reason for his setting-aside. It was that wretched lecture he had delivered at the branding. What a storm had arisen! True, before his congregation, at his father's behest, he had publicly lamented the error. For his father had been sure the dream had been sent to him by Satan. But could he, himself, be sure?

His doubts made him sleepless and tense. He knew he had grown captious—irritable and irritating. Some days the very tone of his loved father's voice made him wince. His scholars at Harvard dreaded the moods in which he would lash out at their stupidity in the choicest Ciceronian Latin. Often he would not bother to glance up as he walked the streets, and he offended many by his indifference. Yet at other times there was a new charm, a diffidence, to his manner. Sorrowfully his father watched his broodings. He prayed for him, yearned over him, knowing that he suffered.

16

AT Paradise the last hay harvest was cut and this was called the rowen. Men and women alike tedded the hay. Towards the end of the day Mr. Parre joined them. Although no farmer he had always liked to take some part in the work of his estate, and the servants appreciated his slight sharing in their labour. He was not dressed as a labourer but was fine in black nan-keen, scarlet waistcoat, and gold lace.

Mr. Parre had not gone down under the disgrace to his family. Outwardly he had changed but little except for the greying of his head and a softening of expression. Yet in some way he was hollowing out from within like a tree still broad and strong but rotted at the heart. For the first time in his life he took what came and took it peacefully. It was as if at last

he had learned not to kick against the pricks. Never by word or glance did he reprove either Bathsheba or Christopher for the shame they had brought upon his name. He spoke less freely than of old. Colonel Coffin's decisions were taken with a shrug. He would pace for hours under the willows by the river, loving his New English Paradise. He thought much on the past. Those two wives that he had had . . . one he had loved and one had loved him, and both had been a burden upon him. Now he saw the fault had been in himself. His feet would take him to the burying-ground and he would stand bare-headed beside his dead. No bitterness remained in his heart towards anyone—not even towards himself. So he would stand betwixt the women on the spot where he himself would lie, knowing (with the cunning of the dumb beast) that soon his time would come. It was only at the end of life (and all but too late) he learned to accept and love it.

So now he wished to be part of the harvest. He drove a tandem team of roan horses, harnessed to a great basket wain, slowly through the stubble. Bare-footed haymakers pitched their hay up to him and a boy packed the load, but the horses did not stop. Christopher was there, and Jazan too; Goodman Goad, Seth Bailey, the Younger, two of the Blues, Phoebe Bemis, Gervase, and four other farm servants. Little Hagar stood by and watched.

Mr. Parre stood upon his rustic dais, his nostrils filled with the dry sweetness of the hay. He saw the blue sky above Quantog's Woods, the slouching roofs of Paradise, pierced by the two stone chimneys, the fat backs of the roan tandem, the bright colours of the workfolk's petticoats and smocks; and he felt a peace come over him such as he had not known for years. When he was a lad in Kent, he had gone thus with his father's servants and gathered in the hay. Not from that day

to this had he ever felt such utter contentment. "If this be second childhood, I am delighted to meet you, sir." In those days of his boyhood he had been enchanted with poetry. Poetry and childhood, poetry and boyhood—but for his maturity there had been no poetry. Lines he had forgotten came back to him as he gazed about the fields:

"How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!"

Long ago had he learned those words, and *then* he had believed them—"goodly creatures," "beauteous mankind," "O brave new world!" Disillusionment had come with years, and he had believed them no more. Now, as he stood upon the hay wain and gazed about him, he saw that they were true. The world was brave . . . mankind good and beautiful. And for years he had not known. Not since he had been twelve or so, and now was he seventy-three. For sixty years he had lived in darkness. Now, thank God, he saw!

The hay was coming up too fast for the boy at the back of the load to handle, but in a dream Mr. Parre let the team pull on. The haymakers shouted to him, asking him to pause for them.

"You sunburned sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry:
Make holiday: your rye-straw hats put on
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing."

"The Tempest" . . . that was the name of this old poetry. And was it not in that same play one reads: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life . . . our little

life . . .” He could not finish the verses, and suddenly he woke to the confusion his day-dreaming had brought to the haymakers. He wound the reins about a stake in the wain, seized a fork, and jumped back to help the boy. The well-trained, heavily laden horses slowly continued their way.

No one saw what happened next. Mr. Parre either lost his footing or became dizzy and fell. No one saw him fall, but those nearest him heard a short exclamation of surprise, and there he lay, face down upon the stubble. It was a shock to see a man of his age and dignity flung thus, no matter how gently, to the ground. But he could not be much hurt.

It was Seth Bailey, the Younger, who reached him first. “That was hard luck, sir. May I help you up?”

Gervase, sensing danger through the love he bore, flung down his fork. “Master!” He gently raised the man and saw, with amazement, that his blood was running furiously, seeping through dry roots, following tiny pathways of mouse and mole. Mr. Parre had fallen on top of his two-tined mowing-fork. The ferocious weapon had pierced his lungs through into his heart.

Mr. Parre looked about him diffidently, as though realizing the shocking spectacle he was. Then he seemed to smile. His face contorted, and he coughed an ocean of blood from blue lips. A new look—not of pathetic shame, but of wonder—crossed his face. His limbs twitched, and he was dead.

17

BLACK, black everywhere! The black catafalque, the silver skull and cross-bones on the black pall. Black streamers tied to the dead man’s sword above the hall hearth. The family in black, the neighbours in black. Black gloved and clad were

the eminent men of the Colony, who had come to do last honours to the dead. The black enamelled mourning-rings. The garlands upon the doors of the house and upon the beehives. Waiting outside were the black plumed and caparisoned hearse horses, and they too had silver skulls and cross-bones upon foreheads and loins.

Mr. Parre would be the first citizen of Canaan to be drawn by horses to his grave. All others had gone on the shoulders of the mourners. But a hearse had been in some way contrived after Agnes's arrival, for she knew by now how great folk should be buried. The paint on it was not yet dry. It was she who had thought to bring out from Boston with her all this panoply of plumes and mourning gear. Jazan was afraid that the impressive (but somewhat makeshift) hearse might fall apart. The four black horses were unused to pulling together and disliked the flapping of their mourning garments about their knees. They might bolt. This hearse was the first wheeled vehicle, not designed for farm labour, ever seen in Canaan. One might say it was the first pleasure vehicle—and God grant it stay together!

The arrival of Agnes and Jonathan had been a great relief to Paradise. Jazan was glad that she had only to do as told until the funeral was over. Mostly she minded Fidelia, Agnes's daughter, and Waitstill, the baby. Hagar was suspicious that there was something papish about such elaboration, but she bowed to Agnes's authority.

Interminably, the service had gone on. Speeches had been made. Poems read. Elegiacs pinned to the pall. And soon, now, the coffin would be carried to the waiting hearse. Mr. Richard Mather of Roxbury had come out, riding with the Governor, to deliver the funeral oration. Mr. Redbank was considered too infirm. A few weeks before he had suffered a shock. He

walked only with the aid of his grand-daughter, Rue, and a stout servant.

Jazan had heard Governor Bellingham say in a low voice to the gentleman sent all the way from Ipswich, "Jude Parre *might* have been the greatest man among us."

He might have been? Why was he not? What secret dam had always lain across his life? The young mourning woman could not fathom these hidden morasses, but she knew that they had always existed in her father.

Outside she could see the back of one of the horses, and Gervase standing by, trying to keep the flustered creatures in control. I wonder what Father would think of all this? I think he might be pleased to see how the whole Colony honour him. Even Peter Fearing who, I think, hated him, sent a poem to pin on the pall. This was her constant thought, as the long ceremony wore on. How would he, who lay waxen and washed in his coffin, take these goings-on?

Like an enigma he lay there, with shut and sunken eyes. In the last twenty-four hours (for the funeral had been set at the last possible moment, so that a distinguished group of mourners could gather) Mr. Parre had begun, slightly but unmistakably, to smile. The first look of youthful wonder had left his face and had given place to this more arresting expression. Mr. Parre lay in the midst of all this pomp, seeming to express by his one-sided and slightly contemptuous smiling that it would have suited him better to have been buried three days ago; before it was necessary to bring in such vast quantities of the pungent sweet fern, that lovely herb which—for sinister reasons—was often used in the death chamber.

Mr. Redbank was sitting rather unnaturally, with his square head of coarse, grey curls a little on one side. Tears, without stopping, had streamed from his eyes. There seemed to be

neither beginning nor ending, effort or passion—and certainly no shame—in these tears. Rue sat quietly beside him. She was furious that this old friend of Mr. Parre's had been considered too infirm to deliver more than the opening prayer. But even Rue was shocked when, the service at last over and the bearers about to pick up the dead man, her grandfather, gently but with authority, said he wished to be alone for a few moments with the dead man's sons and daughters. He would like to speak to them in the presence of their father.

No one knew what to do. But there sat the old Pastor, smiling slightly, but expecting obedience.

A little awkwardly, they all filed out, the Governor going first and Rue, reluctantly, last. There were left, gathered about the semi-paralyzed man, Jonathan Fayrweather, with Fidelia moping upon his lap; Agnes, with the baby, Waitstill; Christopher and his wife, Salome; Fenton, with his beautiful branded lady; Jazan; and Hagar.

The old man addressed himself to Fenton, who had been black, moody, and of little use since his father's death.

"Fenton," he said simply, "you are now the head of this house and the master of Paradise. I wish to ask you, in God's name and in the name of this good man—my old friend and your dead father—in the future to carry yourself in such way as befits your new responsibility. You have wrought much shame upon this house. First by marrying an ill-chosen woman behind your father's back and then, having taken such a one, being too indifferent to hold her in proper control. You are like the man who starts a fire, goes off, and lets it spread to his brother's fields. I hold you more deserving of that fearsome brand upon the brow than either of these two unfortunates."

Fenton's chin rested upon his clenched fists. He stared, without resentment and without curiosity, at the aged speaker.

There was no hostility in that dark and level gaze. Bathsheba began to cry.

"And now, before your father's open coffin, in the presence of his dead body, I exhort you to a more ordered way of life. For God has called your father, and has turned over to you the controlling of your younger brother's and sisters' affairs . . . and the lives of certain servants, both men and women. I beg you, stand up now and accept with humble dignity that weight he has laid upon you. Of Agnes, I hardly need to speak. She now has the protection of another. Of Christopher, order your life so as to mitigate the harm which you have already done to him and to Salome—and to your wife, Bathsheba; order well your life in regard to them. They deserve consideration from you, for they have suffered from you."

Salome giggled nervously.

"Hagar—she is sickly and weak. Care for her frail body and nurture in her that soul which is greater than the body. Jazan—I know you love her. God guard her, and teach you how best to fend for her. Now let me think . . . there were two or three matters I had on my mind during all those tedious long speeches and poems. 'Tis hard to find the words . . . but I wish you to understand what it was your father and this house, Paradise, stood for, since the founding of Canaan. It was justice for all—rich and poor, white man and red—food and drink and a roof for all who were in need. Here was a compassion like that our Saviour showed, and a disregard always of what *they* would think," he gestured towards the open door beyond which the great gentlemen waited about the hearse, "for he stood forth a man. Upon his two feet he stood, and dealt fairly and kindly by all! I beg of you children of Jude Parre to live in accord and be honourable one with another, and do not forget nor neglect the great tradition of Paradise."

Then he signed to them that they should kneel, and thanked God that such a man as Jude Parre had ever been upon this earth—admitting that it was the right of him who gave also to take away (blessed is the name of the Lord)—and begged forgiveness if at that moment it seemed too hard to bear this loss.

Between Elizabeth and Fidelia, they buried him—back of the meeting-house. Beside the first wife were Anselm, Rufus, and Will, those English posies that could not live away from hedgerows and primroses. But Fidelia had been alone. So these folk under the ground waited the coming of Mr. Parre.

18

ONE evening, through a welter of drifts and cold, Fenton Parre arrived at his own gate. With him were four men. They were wrapped in furs and leather, with woollen caps upon their heads and heavy hawling gloves upon their hands. The sunset light was pink about them. The horses were led away to the barns, and the five riders piled into the house. They seemed to fill all Paradise with their good humour. Fenton, calling for Phoebe to pull off his great boots and bring him a pair of moccasins, announced that in three days he must sail with the delegation to England.

"I'm here for but one night only, so let it be a night! These friends came to bear me company. And this Jan Royalle—he is so fresh out from England, he has never seen such snows before." He indicated a slender fellow with a deceptively girlish face. "We thought we'd show Jan Royalle . . ."

Everything was done for the education of this quiet young gentleman. The hall fire must be built up with the largest logs. Royalle had never seen such hearths in England. The table-

board must be set up again in the hall so that Royalle could see how good country food was in the New World.

Fenton, walking up and down, passing from hall to kitchen and back again to hall, threw everything into happy confusion. With his coming, Paradise burst into life once more. Sad and a little dour had it been since Mr. Parre's death. The farm servants were busy with the fires. It took four men to drag in a log great enough to suit the master's whim. A barrel of rum was rolled out. The Goodwife was scurrying about like an old, harassed white rabbit, popping up and down the ladder to the cellar, her voice of command ringing out through the laughter of the men, the chatter of the women. The dignity Bathsheba had maintained in her husband's absence now left her. She alone, of all the household, seemed distressed at his arrival, and she looked badly. The skull emerged through the delicacy of her face. She fawned upon her husband a little. True, he had introduced her as his wife. He had kissed her, but he had kissed Jazan and Goody Goad and Hagar—and especially Phoebe—as well. When Gertrude and Sheepshead came in for a moment, he paid more heed to these dogs than to her. "So you are going to England," she said and laughed bitterly. "And for how long, sir?"

Fenton said he would not return with the other delegates. It would be fall before he came back. He would do business for his brother Fayrweather.

"Plenty to eat and much to drink, my Goodwife," Fenton was commanding. "I stopped at Orde's and told the boy there to go about to certain houses and invite folk to come drink my health."

Fenton took his jews' harp from his pocket and struck up the rollicking (and ribald) air of "There dwells a pretty maid, and her name is Sis." Like most Indian traders, he could play

the jews' harp. It took no skill but only knack. Even Indians quickly learned to play it and would give the finest beaver for a jews' harp. The men hummed the old catch, which they had been singing ever since their last drink at Sudbury. They were either too well bred, or too sober, to sing the words in the presence of ladies.

The hall began to fill with the rich smell of meats and drink. Hams, smoked with beech wood, and venison, just the right age; a mighty rabbit pie; cold ducks; mincemeat, rich in brandy and suet; hot yellow journey cakes; home-made cheeses the size of a baby's head; and white baker's bread were piled upon the board. Fenton took a tankard of beer, sweetened it with molasses, and flavoured it with rum. Into this the flip-dog, heated red hot in the fire, was plunged hissing. The drink foamed and gave off its pleasant characteristic odour of burning. Tankard after tankard of this hot flip Fenton prepared. The smell of it mixed with the smell of food and the wet garments of the men, the bear's grease on their boots. The sober rafters echoed with such shouts as had not been heard for many a year. The jews' harp buzzed and thwanged whenever Fenton had a free hand for it.

Before the men had finished their supper—and they ate enormously—the guests began to arrive. Goody Goad shook her head. She saw that not only was everyone willing to drink the health of Fenton but to eat them out of house and home. Twenty, thirty . . . she was losing track of the new-comers, and they all seemed somewhat hungry and very thirsty. She sent Phoebe to the cellar to bring up a basket of dried herrings. This, however, did not assuage hunger, and it did increase thirst. And round and round, from hand to hand, the jacks of cold ale and tankards of hot flip were passed. The flip-dog went constantly from the embers into the beer.

To the surprise of everyone, Christopher and Salome came over from Founder's. Christopher still avoided company. Seeing that Bathsheba was in the hall, he kept to the kitchen. He wanted to ask his brother about some details of the Algonquin language. Was it true that the Tarratines, in speaking of a woman, use one word and the Nipmucs another? He had brought a sheaf of papers with him. Fenton sat beside him for a moment at the kitchen table. He answered these pedantic questions absent-mindedly. Christopher inked his pen and wrote down what he said. Salome fussed about him like a hen with one chick. When Fenton asked his brother about the harvest that fall, Salome answered for him. She seemed to wish to take even so small a burden from her husband's shoulders. Too good to him, thought Fenton. He looked at her with curiosity. He saw she was gazing through the open door into the hall. Bathsheba sat by the hall fire, lost in melancholy, apart from all the noisy merriment. Fascinated and in silence, Salome stared at her. There seemed to be no hatred in Salome's eyes. Only when at last Mercuricus English, the wiry young smith, hid her from view did she turn her eyes away.

"How soon will your baby come, Salome?" he asked.

Her face brightened. "Oh, I don't know . . . 'tis now my fourth month . . . I know I have felt him kicking. I'm so afraid. . . . Goody tells me that women who are in too great hurry for their children often bear them early, so I try not to think of him. I pretend to myself that he won't be born until a year from now."

"Jesu, I hope not!" said Fenton heartily.

Salome already looked on the point of bearing her child that night. That summer she had indeed conceived, but she had raised such a deal of talk over her first premature announcement people now tended to laugh at her. Immediately, she had

begun to show the disfigurement of her condition. She whispered to her brother-in-law, "Kit does not like me to talk about it . . . I cannot imagine why. Should you not think he would be proud—proud even as am I?"

Soon Fenton got away and joined his guests. Jan Royalle, in spite of his modest, diffident manner, was the centre of the group in the hall. Everyone who met this teachable young man seemed to feel a personal responsibility to explain how things were done in the new land. A little heavily, Paul Blue told him about the Indians. The miller had made him a dissertation on the grinding of Indian corn. The miller was slightly unsteady. He had come with all his sons, but his wife had not come. She resented the position of importance Gervase now had at Paradise. Seth Bailey, the Younger, whom his father had commanded to court Jazan Parre, was scheming with the young girl how he might make a short stop at the parsonage—and his father would never know. He had long loved Rue Redbank, and Jazan often helped him cover his tracks.

"You ought to have one more flip, Seth," Jazan was saying. "I never saw you so handsome and bold before. Tonight, I think you will court Rue as she deserves."

"'Tis hard courting on cold water," Seth agreed.

This one sentence rang out over the rest of the hubbub, and everyone laughed. Hairy little Mercuricus had clung to Jazan's side, as he always did on public occasions. By his manner, he seemed to announce himself her chosen man. She did not resent this. They understood each other well. Priscilla Hurlingheart, although she had come with her father and two younger sisters, now suddenly demanded of Paul Blue that he take her home. She had had a wretched evening. For the first time she was jealous of Addie, her fifteen-year-old sister. Addie had not been

sent to England for a fine finish. She fitted into the rustic picture as Priscilla no longer could.

"My head aches, Paul, and I want to go home."

Like many pretty coquettes, Priscilla had in her the making of a shrew. Paul stopped awkwardly in the midst of his dissertation to Jan Royale.

"I'll take you home, Priscilla," her father offered tentatively. He had in his eyes that half-ashamed, half-arrogant look that often comes with years of failure. The girl's black eyes snapped. It was not only an escort home that she wanted, but a public proof that she was able to take a young man away from his companions.

Jazan went into the kitchen, for the moment rid of Mercuricus. She wished Christopher and Salome would leave. They seemed out of place. She, as well as Fenton, had noticed how Salome's eyes continually felt through the door and rested upon the silent, almost forgotten Bathsheba, sitting enthroned in Mr. Parre's wainscoted chair.

"Salome, in your condition, should you not go early to bed?"

"Well, Jazan, in these matters a wife must follow her husband. And I never can get to sleep until Christopher comes in."

"That is true," said Christopher. "She is always wide awake until I come to bed."

This common wifely tyranny had often forced him from his work. He found that his mind was never so fresh as after his wife had gone to bed, and yet, no matter how tired she might be, she always stayed awake until he joined her.

Priscilla, upon Paul's strong arm, was making her la-de-da, English-learnt farewell. The Dillinghams and the Miller Blue were also leaving. Jazan saw that now the bulk of the guests would go. A roar swept up through the hall. She saw Phoebe,

with one stout arm about Gervase's neck, the other flung out dramatically.

"'Tis a fight to the death between us, my Masters. For I've said I will marry him, and Goody Goad says yes. But this Gervase says no."

"You have my permission," yelled Fenton, for no servant might marry without his master's sanction. "And a good match it will be, my dearie, for I am making Gervase steward here, in name as well as fact. Goodman Goad tells me that he wishes to lay down the job."

Three days after Mr. Parre's funeral, Goodman Goad had fallen from a loft and broken his hip. In time it would mend and he would go about a little, helped by two canes, but his usefulness as steward was over. Gervase was congratulated on his new position, but it seemed almost like congratulations for Phoebe as well.

The kitchen was cold after the suffocating heat of the hall. Jazan shivered a little.

"But he says he won't marry me!" cried Phoebe.

"I'll bet on Phoebe."

"I'll bet on Gervase."

Jazan noticed that the silent Gervase made no effort to extricate himself from the crook of the heavy arm. Instead, he patted her rather affectionately.

"There are many better men than I."

"We are all better men," cried Captain Wolcott, who had come out from Boston. He was a man of over forty, bald, heavy, and badly spoken of that he preferred the riotous company of men so much younger than himself, to that of his mature wife and grown-up sons in Roxbury. The famous Cluff the Bear pulled her arm away from Gervase and smacked her

on the mouth. Under her coarse, grey skin, the girl blushed furiously.

Tom Pigge had brought his fiddle with him, and now the drinkers called for a tune. They would dance, they said.

In the kitchen, Salome bent sidewise in pain. She had always been somewhat dyspeptic, but since she had been with child she insisted that any pain which formerly she had called the vapours now came from her condition. Jazan seized the chance to send them home.

"'Tis my fourth month only. No one ever miscarried in a fourth month. Goody, you have told me . . ."

The Goodwife had been leaning back on a form by the kitchen hearth. All her busy life she had been accustomed to sleeping when she might, and now that there was nothing more to be done for her master she had thrown her apron over her face, and slept. She woke, hearing herself addressed, and immediately, as doctor and midwife to the community, offered to attend the nervous lady to her home and even pass the night with her.

After they were gone, Jazan went into the hall. It was blazing hot, but cold as two icicles that will not melt Abraham Blue and Hagar sat stiffly, side by side, disapproving all they saw.

Bathsheba was still sitting in Mr. Parre's great-chair, a pale hand resting on each chair arm, her face thrown back and her eyes closed. The hair was disordered about her face, and through the glittering curls the purple brand stood out, dominating her whole face.

Tom Pigge struck up the strains of "An Old Man's a Bed of Bones." No one could dance it. He tried "Tolly Polly." Then Mercuricus demanded the "Cushion Dance." So the fid-

dle picked up the jig, Tom yelling in triumph. First Mercuricus danced alone, a cushion in his hands.

"This dance it will no further go," he sang, at a signal from the fiddler.

"I pray you, good sir, why say you so?" sang Pigge.

"Because Jazan Parre will not come too."

"She must come too, whether she will or no."

Mercuricus laid the cushion before the lady of his choice, kissed her, and knelt upon it.

"Welcome, Jazan Parre."

Jazan knew the old steps. The jigging of the fiddle went through her blood. She stood up to dance. She made a pretty picture, with her dark hair shaking upon her shoulders, her lithe body responding to the rhythms of the violin. And she sang out the few words in a clear but rather childish voice. At the end her pillow was at Jan Royalle's feet.

"Because Jan Royalle will not come too."

Instantly the young stranger bent his deceptive face to meet hers. He kissed her fairly on the mouth, although anyone to look at him would have thought him more likely to choose a brow. Jazan was surprised. She had purposely not chosen Gervase, although he was there. Jan chose Phoebe. And what a spectacle she was, dancing alone, sweating at every pore, her big bosom bounding! She called loudly for Gervase, but he had left the room rather than see the stranger's lips touch Jazan's. She threw the cushion before Fenton, who embraced her warmly. He stood up, threw back his hair, and did steps that only a few of the men and Jazan herself knew were closer to Indian dancing than to the old English jigging. There was no woman left for Fenton to choose but Hagar—who was shocked and angry at this lewd game—a very dingy and respectable

servant, and his own wife, sitting like an ivory statue in his father's great-chair.

He selected Bathsheba. As the woman's eyes opened and she saw him thus kneeling before her, her whole face, which had looked disintegrated, came together. She accepted his kiss upon her cheek and a little slowly got to her feet. Tall and stately, she stood before them all, like some woman risen from the grave. She let Tom Pigge play the opening bars twice, then signalled to him that he played too fast. Slowly she began to dance.

It was unlike anything Jazan had ever seen before. Instead of letting her arms hang down like a sailor loosely footing a hornpipe, she kept them bent at the elbow, her hands raised to the level of her shoulders. Her whole body was held with the most delicate precision, and yet from her emanated a curious lasciviousness that made Jazan's bright steps and Phoebe's calf-like gambols seem colourless. Her shoulders moved little, but her hips, under the voluminous rust silk of her skirt, followed the flow of the music. The long, white neck was held at its customary angle. Her face was wildly beautiful. When the time came for her to announce her successor and set the cushion before him, she went perversely back to the first line. Tom Pigge humoured her. Suddenly she stopped short in her tracks. Her hands came down and were folded at her waist. She looked about her imperiously.

"This dance it will no further go."

She did not sing the words, but said them with a final air, walked gracefully to the great-chair, and sat herself down.

Not only her words but her fine performance had ended the dance. And then, it was true, the next man would have been forced to choose between Hagar and the grubby serving-woman.

Tom Pigge was still sawing at his fiddle, and Phoebe, Mercuricus, and Captain Wolcott were doing a few half-hearted steps in the middle of the hall. After Bathsheba, nothing would have persuaded Jazan to stand up again. She had, until that moment, looked upon dancing as a clumsy hopping.

Bathsheba sat in tragic isolation. Her brand and her mood embarrassed the guests, who were now slightly drunk. Coats were off and waistcoats unbuttoned. Of the townsfolk only a half dozen remained, and these all men. Some of them Jazan did not like. Then, too, she was afraid that news of the evening's hilarity would be spread about, come back to Mr. Redbank, who had it much to heart that Fenton Parre make a good start as head of his family. This was the start he had made!

The great thick-headed fellow they called Cluff the Bear was preparing to dance a strange dance in the middle of the floor. He said it was the bear dance, and he had learned it among the Hassanomisoes. Supposedly it was for young Jan Royalle that he danced this dance. Jan, throughout the evening, had displayed both the most delicate manners and the greatest curiosity about the way things were done in this new world. What he had drunk (flips and rum, cider, sack-posset, and brandy) had no effect upon him except, as Jazan noticed, a certain glassy look to his eyes. Two of the men clapped their hands, swayed their bodies, and cried out in rhythm, "Hey-ho, who, who, who." And the others caught the rhythm and joined in.

This was too much for Hagar. A heathen dance on top of all that had gone before! She cleared her throat, stood up dramatically, admonished Fenton, and begged the others to desist. Mercuricus English sprang at the pretty, stiff, little girl, picked her up in his strong smith's arms, whirled her about, and sat

her in Tom Pigge's lap. She left so quickly everyone laughed. Jazan was glad she was now sitting beside Jan. She felt safe with him, drunk or sober.

Cluff danced on. He had put bearskin mittens on his hands. His body grew looser and looser. Even his face changed at last, so it seemed as though it was a bear dancing before them. The floor responded to his feet. The "hey-ho, who, who, who," the clapping, the swaying of the men's bodies beat like a drum.

Now Jan had an arm about her. She hardly knew how this had happened. Hagar struck a commanding attitude and, making Abraham stand beside her, begged in God's name that this paganry cease. The Bear dropped to all fours; rushed at her, upsetting her; gambolled about, catching at the women's ankles. Phoebe was in her element. Bathsheba shuddered. Jazan was glad of the protection that the strange arm about her promised. She was half afraid of the drunken Bear and sorry for Hagar, thus up-ended—her poor, rickety little legs that she was always so modest about—displayed to all.

Fenton had been quiet and dignified since the bear dance began, so his sister knew he was shamefully drunk. She was hurt that he could so abuse his last night at home. Gervase too was remote and silent, but he was cold sober. Their eyes met. And she knew that what she thought of the matter he thought also, and she hoped he did not like the strange arm laid about her shoulders.

After the dance the subject of bundling came up. All tried to explain at once to Jan Royalle this rustic custom, which he had not met in England.

"You see, Royalle, in these New English houses of ours we rarely have but one warm room in the winter, and there we all sit—the one on top of the other, grandpa and grandma, mamma, papa, the servants, all the children, the cats and dogs.

But this is not congenial to the mood of lovers, and the only other warm place in the house is bed. So we lay the lovers, fully dressed, in bed in one of the cold chambers. Thus they keep warm and get some privacy."

"And sometimes—by mistake—some children, Royalee."

"And it's right good fun. . . ."

"I like," said the Bear with difficulty, "our New World customs. I like . . ."

"And I as well," laughed Royalee. "I wish you'd show me how 'tis done."

Little Mercuricus, pointing at Hagar and Abraham, said, "At least we have here some lovers."

It seemed a proper punishment for the churlish pair. Fenton seized on Abraham, who fought and kicked in a most ungallant manner. Him they trussed to a broom. Hagar was struggling against the wiry strength of Mercuricus. The reluctant lovers were carried across the cold entry-way into the great chamber that, since Mr. Parre's death, Bathsheba had demanded for herself.

In the hall Tom Pigge was asleep in a corner, his fiddle beside him, his snores coming loudly. Then Jazan wished that Goody Goad had not gone for the night to Founder's. She felt something should be done but she had no idea what. Bathsheba still sat in her chair, but her hands were now over her face and sobs shook her long body. Jazan felt Jan's arm tighten about her. As he whispered to her, his lips touched her hair. He wanted her to go with him across the hall and see this bundling. Now Dick Blue and Captain Wolcott and that Denning boy (who lived over by the Sheep Walks and whom Fenton liked and she did not) came back into the hall. They were demanding that Royalee come with them.

"We've got 'em in bed, Royale, but we can't hold them forever."

Jan pressed Jazan's hand lightly and left her. For a moment she was alone in the hall with the weeping Bathsheba and the snoring Pigge. She heard the shouts from the great chamber, and Hagar's flying voice. Gervase came in from the kitchen, crossed to her, and sat on a stool beside her.

"Is there any way of stopping this, Gervase?"

"None that I see. But after this you women *must* go to bed. The men are showing off before you and that Jan Royale—whoever he is."

She lowered her voice. "It's because Fenton cannot stand the thought of Bathsheba that he acts so badly. Will he never come home again and be as he used to be?"

Gervase shook his head. "In ten more minutes I promise you they will all be ready for their beds."

A roar—half a protest, half a laugh—came from Phoebe, who had gone with the men. Instantly it was as though Jazan could see his ears prick like a listening terrier.

"I'd better go in. It's well to have one sober head in the crowd. Not but what I think Hagar and Abraham got what they deserved in this rough handling."

Jazan froze. "Very well, I'll stay here."

"No. Go to bed, my poor tired child. You were never meant for such rowdyism. And make Bathsheba go with you. I'll look out for the rest."

Jazan went to Bathsheba and tried to stop her tears.

"Oh, Jazan, I'm so afraid . . . he's going to England. And when he comes back . . ."

Jazan tried to turn her mind from Fenton. She told her how beautiful her dancing was. Bathsheba would not be turned. She wouldn't go to bed. All those lackeys were in her bedroom.

At last, in despair, Jazan offered her a share of her own and Hagar's bed, and so she led Bathsheba away. It was past midnight. They flung off some of their clothing and lay down together, but not to sleep.

19

GERVASE kept his word and did what he might to quiet the matter down and get the whole household to bed. It was icy cold in the great chamber, and the candle that had been brought in was now out. For Mr. Parre's sake, he resented the indignity to Hagar. And she was so young, only fifteen. He also had his concerns for Phoebe. He did not want her hauled about by these men, who were like to misunderstand her good nature.

The Bear was so drunk he thought it was himself who was being bundled. Nobody had told him to take off his fur mittens, and he had not the wit to do so. As soon as the blankets had been turned down he had grabbed Phoebe and she had grabbed Mercuricus, and so five or six were rolling in the vast bed together. In the confusion, Hagar broke loose and they lost her. Then the canopy came down.

"Fenton, we've lost Hagar. Will Phoebe do just as well?"

"Not for Abraham."

"Then cast out Abraham!" And broom and all, they flung him in a corner. The bed cords creaked, ready to burst. "The question is, Who will suit Phoebe best?"

"She says she is going to marry my new steward. Now where is the fellow?"

"But I'm the better man," swore Cluff, and again with his fur mittens he seized upon the plump young woman. She screamed out to Gervase. The dark strength of the men's

bodies, the coarse hilarity, Cluff's hot breath upon her throat, frightened her. But even as she feared, she giggled.

Gervase hesitated. "Sergeant, if any man is to be bundled with Phoebe, it should by rights be me."

All except Cluff agreed, and in no time they had him out. The lovers were felicitated, and the men lumbered across the hall. But now all were ready for bed, and the soberest began to lay out mattresses and bedding.

It had been expediency only that had made the young steward consent to being bundled with Phoebe Bemis. He saw that the men might do much worse than this. If this satisfied them, he was ready to do his part. At first he had little thought of the woman, lying there beside him. She turned and the bed cords creaked.

"Gervase?"

"Yes, Phoebe?"

"Gervase, I want to ask you and have you tell me the truth. Are you going to marry me?"

"No, Phoebe—you know that."

"Is it because I ain't fine enough for you?"

He paused. This was one reason.

"Oh, I think it's a wicked shame for women who can't marry men to stand in their way to marrying women who can marry them. I think Mr. Parre was a wicked man to bring you up almost like a son of the house and spoil you for everybody else."

"I won't hear such against Mr. Parre," he said. It was really that he did not want her approaching any closer to Jazan.

"You love her—don't you?"

"Perhaps."

"And you don't love me. You haven't ever loved me."

"I have my own feelings, and they don't seem much like

anybody else's. I don't know that I 'love' as you call it, anyone."

This seemed to reassure her. He had not heard her move, but she was much closer to him.

"Would you kiss me now?" she breathed.

He felt a sudden resentment against the whole world. A moment of despair, when he saw himself fairly trapped. What could Jazan ever be to him? He turned to Phoebe, and his arms went about her. She might be common, but she was indeed a lovable wench. And she loved him. He had known this for months. All her ridiculous talk had not hidden the fact from him. With a slight catch in his breath, he buried his face in her throat. He felt the soft, yielding curves of her body. He did not care what happened to her nor to himself. When he was with Phoebe past and future lost meaning. Only the present moment existed. Years of repression melted away, as he felt that soft, warm mouth against his own. What, after all, might Jazan ever be to him? And this was real, this loving woman's body pressed against his. As he held her, he knew one thing. He had a need for Phoebe.

A sepulchral voice broke in upon them from a dark corner.

"In the name of God, get up from that evil bed and set me free."

They had no idea that Abraham, trussed to the broom, was still lying in the cold corner where he had been tossed.

"What! Are you there, Abraham?"

"Indeed I am, Gervase, and the floor is icy cold. Can't you get up and let me loose? Or are you too busy bussing your moppet?"

NOW that Boston house which for years had been a haven became a torture to young Fearing. For in November Peter Fearing had died in his pulpit. He had finished his sermon. He had bowed to the parting benediction. But that bald dome had never lifted from the Bible on which it had sunk. The corpulent, discarded body was laid away in the Copps Hill tomb. His soul was in Heaven. Forethought Fearing was alone.

No intimate had he among servants or neighbours. Not one fellow-clergyman to whom he might speak of his troubles. No dog to welcome him home or cat to purr beside his hearth. He was alone and in doubt.

Doubt had begun over two years ago with that miserable affair of the Parre branding. Then for the first time he questioned his father's easy positive faith and had yearned for Christ's own words. But could a way of life be built up on the four gospels only? Was "go and sin no more" all that should be said to an adulteress? He himself was a rich man. Should he indeed give all to the poor? Should a farmer (for instance) take no more heed of the morrow than a lily? His father had not understood his worries but had answered him gently. As long as he had lived, the old man's strength and love upheld his son.

The skin of Forethought's face, so fine-grained as to be almost poreless, took on the waxen look of such skins in ill health. A muscle high up under his left eye had begun a troublesome twitching. This little malady embarrassed him. Even when alone he would hide the spot with his fingers.

If only he might sleep! Dear God, is that so much to ask? Dear God, if I might weep! For the loss of his father had

shocked him so deeply tears had been impossible for him.

He guessed his present weakness had been noticed, for the chief ministry of his father's church had not been offered him. And why should it be? He had told the elders honestly that he wished for a little to "lie fallow." That he could not preach until he had come to a conclusion within himself. The grey-beards listened to him with suspicion and sympathy, watching (it seemed to him) the dimple come and go high up under his left eye. He was young, they said, and the young often are . . . unstable. In time he might indeed equal his great father but now . . . His ears caught the one word "unstable" and he winced. But although he could understand why it was they wished him to stay on as "teacher" only (some eminent divine being set above him) he was humiliated that they did not offer him the chief ministry. Was not even a somewhat torn and damaged Fearing better than any other man? He did not wish to be set aside. Part of him wished power and glory.

Restlessly he would pace his house or sit brooding for hours, his head bowed, his fingers covering the twitching muscle. Even he knew that this brooding was not thinking.

All winter he had toyed with the thought of leaving Boston, going to Canaan. Mr. Redbank had written him when his father died, and a correspondence had followed. Forethought had poured out his very soul to the paralyzed old man whom he had known only by sight. Mr. Redbank's body was all but destroyed. Some said his mind as well. Only his soul remained; and Forethought clung to this soul, so full of Christ's own spirit was it. "Love God" and "Love your neighbour." "That is all," wrote the old man, "there is in theology."

Mr. Redbank had begged him to live with him as a son at the parsonage and take over all pastoral duties but the preaching only. This he thought himself still able to do. At first the

proud young man was amazed at his simplicity. He, famous son of famous father, most eloquent of pulpit orators, he hide himself away in an inland village, accept so humble and silent a part? But Christ himself had taught humility, and sometimes it seemed to him that Mr. Redbank was not just a country parson but some actual follower of Christ who lived on into the present day. So might Saint John have written from Patmos.

Twice he had seized a pen and accepted Mr. Redbank's offer. Twice torn up the letter. Should he stay on in Boston? He believed that if even now he went to the Elders, told them that his miasms had gone from him and he was willing to follow his father's ways, they would invite him to the headship of the great church. Or should he go out to Canaan to Mr. Redbank, to Christ?

The February day was drawing to a close. Forethought Fearing stood by his casement and looked across High Street at the Macey house and shop, shuttered and desolate, with only old Dido living on in the ell as care-taker. It was he and his father, so the Widow had said, who had driven her to leave Boston. Cruel, she had called them in her rage over Christopher Parre's fate. No followers of Christ. He remembered how in boyhood he had loved to go to the Widow Macey's. She always had had a sugar bun or a sassafras root for him. His mind was so disordered through sleeplessness and worry he had a painful sense that any moment he might actually see a little boy in hanging sleeves, with long flaxen curls falling over his blue pinafore, steal from the Fearing mansion to the Widow Macey's. The little ghost of his dead self. He had never been the boy to run and shout. . . .

Instead of the silent, long-dead lad he feared to see three little scarlet capes scampered down the snowy street. The high

peaks of the hoods hid the faces, but he guessed they were two sisters and a tiny brother. The oldest girl swung over the Macey fence and ran to the kitchen ell. The other two stood pressed against the fence, eager to watch but ready to run. Anyone else in Boston would have known the naughty little things were taunting poor, half-blind old Dido, who it was said might be a witch. Forethought, remembering the sweets the Widow Macey had given him and how he had loved her for them, suddenly hungered for such love.

He hurried to the kitchen, where an old serving-woman sat cleaning a fowl. "Sweets," he cried. "Sir?" She thought him distraught. The poor lamb had brooded so upon his father's death. "Quick, I must have sweets. Are there no almonds in the house—no sugared ginger or sassafras?" It was over a week since he had addressed one word to her and now this childish crying-out for sweets. Forethought seized a handful of sugared almonds and bare-headed and coatless hurried out his front door. The biggest red cape was throwing itself over the fence. "Run," she cried, "she's after us." The little ones turned to run. There before them like the wrath of God stood the tall, black-clad clergyman. "Stop," he commanded. Their fat and trembling legs failed them. The tiny one began to cry. Caught between a witch and God's just anger. "Don't hurt my little brother," screamed the red cape from the top of the fence, the stone she had picked up to throw at old Dido still in her hand. "Don't you dare touch him!" Forethought spoke gently to the red, peaked hoods before him. He could not see the children's faces. "I've sugared almonds for you. Come and get them." Unlike his father he had always been successful in his handling of children. He spread the almonds on his palm as though offering an apple to a timid horse.

"Hezekiah! Rachie! don't you touch them." Wails of terror

went up from under the cowering hoods. He took a step forward. They shrank from him. Then something inside his head broke. He never knew what happened, but he had taken his fist full of almonds and flung them at the children's heads. He, who had always been gentle in his ways, burst into a paroxysm of futile rage. His voice broke, and the stone in the older girl's hand struck his shin. His face was convulsed, and he feared he might weep. Yet why a man should weep because of the discourtesy of children he did not know.

Blindly, still hatless and capeless, although the day was chill, he flung himself down High Street, letting his feet lead him where they would.

So he had come to this . . . come to this . . . and what lay ahead for him? He did not notice the curious stares that followed him. Nor did he know that the words he formed in his heart were also forming upon his silent lips. By habit his feet carried him to North Boston. Upon a headland looking boldly out to sea was his father's tomb. He flung himself on the snowy ground before it. Then tears came. The first since his father's death. In a torrent of words he prayed half to God and half to the corpse within.

In time tears and words both ceased. He felt a relief such as he had not known for months. The problem which had been torturing him was settled. He would go out to Canaan, for in Boston the very children threw stones at him. To Canaan and to Mr. Redbank. He must go his own way. Christ's way. He stood up and stared over the broad mouth of the Charles, filled with broken ice, and beyond were the low hills of Cambridge. A grey sky and a grey earth but between them the whole sunset (full of enough colour to have filled the sky) was pressed into a narrow band. He had never seen so living

a red, and it exalted him. For these celestial fires burned to the west, and to the west lay Canaan.

He would go home now, write his letter (and this time he knew it would be sent). He would go to his bed and sleep for hours. Even as he stood beside the tomb he felt sleep welling up through him, numbing his limbs, relaxing his senses. He turned to go. He stopped a moment, head thrown back as though listening. What was that dream he once had had? He could not remember it . . . but thus he had come weeping to his father's tomb. And a little brown spaniel with yellow eyes had followed him.

With resolute steps he swung off down Broad Street.

2

FROM the waist down Mr. Redbank was a man of stone. He sat night and day in a donkey cart. The door of the parsonage had been widened so that the little beast could draw the cart in and out. A runway had been built over the meeting-house steps, and thus from his basket cart (the donkey having been led away) Mr. Redbank still preached to his flock.

But it was true, as he told his young assistant, he could do little except preach. All other duties must be taken over by Forethought.

"I believe," he said in the difficult accent resulting from his third shock, "love must be the basis of all church discipline." Forethought eagerly agreed. His face had lost the harassed look of winter. He had slept well since the momentous decision had been made. The twitching under his eye was gone. "It is not enough to force good conduct upon people. They must wish it for themselves." And Mr. Redbank went on to tell what his assistant's first duty was to be.

Seems in December a young woman and a young man (servants both) had been bundled together with the consent of their master. Nor, he feared, had matters stopped with that. Goodwife Goad had told him they had since then courted in byre and field and in the young man's bed as well. Yet the male servant stubbornly refused honourable marriage.

Forethought's delicate gorge rose. He had imagined himself in Canaan as praying for the dying, comforting the bereft—not prying into the loutishness of two louts. Yet such was to be his first pastoral duty!

“You wish me to speak to them privately?”

“Yes, you must find out the truth. The Goody is so heart-set upon their marriage I cannot entirely take her word.”

“Cannot their master direct them?”

“Their master is abroad from here nor will he be back until fall. His lady is in no position to correct the incontinence of others. I did try to talk to the eldest sister at home, but she's a young miss bare eighteen. I saw my words hurt her. I hope the young lady can be kept out of this matter.”

“I will never force such uncleanness upon a young maid, sir.” Forethought stopped abruptly. His translucent skin flushed. “It cannot be, sir . . . no it must be. Captain Parre is the absent master and surely *his* wife is in no position to correct others! And the young lady . . . she is . . . I suppose . . .”

“Jazan Parre.”

Forethought went to the bucket by the door, dipped up a gourdful of water, and drank slowly.

“Yes, sir?”

“She has told me that while a child she sat under you for instruction.”

“She did.”

"And I believe some intimacy sprang up? At least so I gathered from her words—but her words are always few."

Forethought's eyes shone. She had not forgotten.

"Of the strangest sort. Hardly of the mind. Hardly of this world. But again and again she has come to me in dreams." He sat in the chair beside the cart. "Did she not tell you of the last meeting we had? Oh, sir! I remember I wrote you at length of that miserable day I tried to carry Christ's own words to the blood-lusting mob gathered for the branding. Well, when it was done and I had failed, it was she whom I met. She believed in me."

The old man smiled. "From your letter I gathered it was some vision you met on Blackstone's Point. Not one of the ladies of Paradise."

"So it was, and it was she."

"Of this she never has spoken."

"Nor have I—ever—until this moment." So he guessed that to her as well as to himself the meeting had meant much.

Mr. Redbank was silent. "Why not?" he thought. "They are of equal birth and wealth. Young Fearing is the loneliest man I ever knew. It is a wife he needs." In words he said, "It would be the greatest kindness if you could straighten out this matter of her servants for her."

Forethought was on his feet. "I will go this moment, sir. What may their names be?"

"A Phoebe something-or-other and Gervase Blue. It is to him you must talk. I have told the chief female servant at Paradise (the one who is so set on pushing this matter through) that you will soon come. Go now and stay for supper. Ask for a servant to light you home. She will know whom to send."

3

SO these were the gates of Paradise! Forethought stood looking down the driveway past the thatched barns. There black, bleak, and peaked was Paradise itself. He felt the contempt of its backside turned thus to him and to the village, and its little windows seemed to leer at him askance. The earth of April, which to a farmer's eye was full of promise, seemed dead and sodden to him.

Boldly he stepped within the gate, but his way was protested by such a roaring of dogs as he had never heard before. Four in all. Three of them the largest he had ever seen. If it had not been for their collars he would have feared they were wolves. The brindled hair stood up on their shoulders. Yellow eyes gleamed with hate. He stopped in confusion and some fear. They held him at bay . . . even at the gates of Paradise.

"Sheepshead, be damned to you! Gertrude—you old bitch! Gone-away! Valiant!"

A young fellow, with tawny hair, quick tight body, and ringing voice had leaped from somewhere into the midst of the dogs and threatened them with his stick. The animals turned over the responsibility of the matter to him. One made a contemptuous gesture with its hind legs. The grey bitch growled and stalked off. Forethought wished to thank his rescuer but did not know how to address him. He had on a white smock-frock and muddy leathern leggings, and the stick he held was obviously an ox goad. His manner as he swung around did not seem that of a farm servant. The eyes were wide set, clean, and blue, the face brown and ruddy; but it was the air of self-confidence that made him wonder if this might not be some young Parre of whom he never had heard.

"The dogs always stop strangers just inside the gate. But if you stand still there's no danger. 'Tis their nature to hunt wolves, not clergymen." And Forethought believed that this bold fellow thought it beneath the dignity of such fine dogs to hunt clergymen. "They'll learn to know you in time."

So the arrogant young man knew at least that Fearing was no transient. He must know who he was. Why did he not call him courteously by name? He was indifferently scratching the back of the smallest dog with his goad. Forethought noted the broad, heavy hands. Workman's hands that did not go with the grace of the body or the distinction of the head. Those hands. And it came back to him. That boy whom he had found beating Will Sisley . . . yes, this was he! The name—Gervase Blue. It had sounded familiar when Mr. Redbank had spoken it. Gervase Blue. Thus had Jazan Parre called her servant.

"You are called Gervase Blue?"

The young man looked up from his dog scratching.

"I am. And you, sir, are Mr. Fearing." He looked at him a little defiantly as though he had guessed what was behind this visit.

"I have come to call upon your household."

"There's few of us here. The men are in the fields. Most of the women have gone to a quilting, but some of our ladies are about."

"Will you then announce me to your ladies?"

Gervase cast a glance at his patient oxen.

"Nay. The dogs announced you. Yonder flags lead to the kitchen door. Go in and call them. I've mended my yoke and must be back to my men, sir."

"My" men! Why, the fellow couldn't be over twenty. And were dogs the only servants to announce a guest's coming? Forethought bitterly disliked his welcome at Paradise. Here

was wealth without the delicacy of wealth. Roughness without the humble heart of the poor. Still afraid that the dogs might be back at him he picked his way along the path. Three geese with outstretched necks hissed at him. A dappled stallion nickered from the barn-yard. The kitchen door was open, and he stepped within.

The paraphernalia of a farm great enough to feed its own and send pack-horse after pack-horse to Boston with the surplus he hardly saw. Seated at the far end of the vast, dark kitchen sat a young girl bent over a book. He saw that she had a finger pressed in either ear. Her head was half covered with a head-cloth. So he stood and watched her. With a little sigh her fingers came out of her ears and her head bent forward.

"Jazan," he said in the lowest voice.

She was on her feet, one hand going to her heart in a pretty modest gesture. He saw to his bewilderment that she was a stranger and golden-haired as an angel.

"Oh, sir . . . oh, Mr. Fearing. I had no idea. Was there no one about to announce you?"

He was sure she had not heard him murmur her sister's name.

"Gervase Blue," he said casually and smiled a little. "But he said the dogs do the announcing here."

"Indeed they do not! Not for folks like you. What churls we must seem! I heard the hubbub, but I was so deep in Amos. I only tried to shut the noise out. Come, we will go into the hall."

He saw that she was younger than Jazan and he knew the world would deem her prettier, for she was pink and white as a rose and her hair not severe, straight, and black but a mass of golden curls. As she moved before him to the hall he first

thought her lame. She jerked as she walked, and he remembered how fast, silent, and light were the feet of her sister.

Hagar motioned him to take the great-chair by the hearth embers. Above the hearth he noticed the array of arms. Mr. Parre's sword was still hung with black. He noted the fair map of New England upon the wall, the dull white and brown and red of the room. Paradise. Here it was both Captain Parre and Christopher had been shaped. Here was the place Bathsheba bore her fearsome brand.

"I have always," the young lady began, "admired your father more than anyone else. And to think you have come to Canaan! Oh, sir, we need you badly. Such a sty as we have become. Can you believe it—the last three Sabbaths Mr. Redbank has preached only of love! We need your preaching."

"But, Mistress, I am not engaged to preach. My capacity is a humble, silent one."

"But some time when you hear what is given us for sermons your Fearing blood will rise in you. You will not be able to rest quiet. Then you will speak out."

He could not tell her that it was to escape his Fearing blood that he had left Boston.

"You have no idea how much sinning and loose living there is about Canaan." She dropped her voice. "Even in Paradise. We look to you, sir, for the right words."

"It is hard," he began gently, "always and always to know the right thing to say."

"Oh, no," she contradicted him shortly. He was amazed and a little amused. She had a sharp manner that might stimulate and might irritate. "God sets aside such men as you to be his instruments, knowing good and evil from birth. To refuse to act as God's ambassador here upon earth would be the highest

treason. And yet," she said, "we are all of us—even you, sir—but human. To falter is human. . . ."

It was as though his own father spoke to him. He looked at the tender little thing with wonder and growing respect. So they talked together until the women came home from the quilting and the men in from the fields.

Mistress Fenton Parre. She greeted the man who more than any other was responsible for her mutilated forehead with exclamations of delight. No shame did *she* show that they had met before! By her manner she took the honour of the visit upon herself. Branded she might be, but she was obviously mistress of Paradise!

That stout old woman, nodding at him, whispering that she knew why he was come, promising to "arrange things." This must be the Goodwife Goad.

A plump and hearty wench, introduced to him as Phoebe. She flushed under her thick hide as she curtsied to him. Another young woman, just over from Scotland, as bonny as a blue bell, her accent as rough as a thistle. Gervase Blue (once more). Him they called "steward." He presented his farm servants to the new clergyman with as much courtesy and pride as though he were a court chamberlain and these young knights. The Penny Brothers, narrow-hipped and narrow-eyed as Gipsies. Hosea Framingham—the only one who could possibly be thirty. Jack Truly—sluggish and soft-eyed as an ox. And last of all little Billy Bright. This orphaned child was seven only. Obviously he was the darling of both men and women. Because Billy did not seem woe-begone and timid like most child servants, Mr. Fearing thought him forward. His face was as bright as a fox cub's. His flaxen hair was not cropped to the skull as symbol of his servitude but cut squarely on shoulders and brow like a little gentleman's.

Mr. Fearing's head was confused with so many new faces and names—and except for the Goads how young they all were, and free and untrammelled in their carriage and words.

And then Bathsheba was saying, "My sister, Mistress Jazan Parre." He had not heard her enter the room, but now she stood before him.

"Truly," she said, "we have met before," and held out her hand to him.

"Often and often," said Fearing, but he thought more of the dream meetings than those of the flesh. He was slightly uncomfortable. Her eyes had always disconcerted him. Bathsheba was bidding him share the head of the board with herself; Hagar asking him to bless their meat. So at last they sat down to rabbits stewed with onions and carrots, golden corn-meal mush, and limitless ale and hard cider. It was a vast, restless family of fifteen or more such as he had never seen in Boston.

4

SUPPER was over. The table-board had been cleared and taken away. Then Hagar told the servants to fetch their work into the hall. Mr. Fearing, she promised, would read to them as in old times her father had. The steward, however, already had his hat upon his head. "No, no, Gervase," the little mistress commanded him.

"There's an agent from Boston at Orde's tonight," said Gervase. "I must see him about our surplus wool." Obviously he had not the least intention of obeying his young lady. Mr. Fearing saw that he must catch him now or lose him. "Mistress Hagar," he said, "I will come again and with pleasure, and read you a whole evening if you wish, but tonight you must

excuse me. Mr. Redbank expects me back." Goody Goad folded the stockings she was knitting and thrust the needles through them with vicious finality.

"Gervase." Evidently hers was the voice of final authority at Paradise.

"Yes?"

"Is your lantern lit?"

"I need no lantern to get to Orde's."

"But you can light the minister to the parsonage on your way. The night is thick as a blanket with fog." He was silent. Forethought was gratified to see his arrogance gone. He looked a little shamefaced and belligerent, like a bad child.

"Phoebe, get Gervase a lantern from the back entry."

"Yes, ma'am." She was long in getting her lantern and anyone could see she had been crying. Forethought's confidence rose. He had come thinking of "sinners." Why, they were nothing but bad children! It would be easy to deal with them.

He made his graceful adieux, promising to come to them often, thanking them for his reception. Then, at the last, he turned to Jazan, who had been silent throughout supper while her sister and sister-in-law had contended for his attention.

He saw she had a black cloak on over her white dress. Her delicate head was also black and white. He smiled and put out his hand.

"I must call you Mistress Parre now-a-days," he said, and wished he had his father's ability to compliment ladies. He wanted to tell her how beautiful to him was her black and whiteness, broken only by the red of the mouth. "But I will always think of you as Jazan."

"Call me as you think, but do not say good night. I am lighting you to the parsonage."

"There's no need," said Gervase, a little roughly. "I can accommodate him."

"But . . ." Forethought stopped in confusion.

"Jazan, put down that lantern. Take off that cloak," snapped the Goodwife.

"If I wish to light a guest I may," said the young girl.

"And so may I," said Gervase, and tried to take the lantern from her hand. "Do you think I am *afraid*," he murmured fiercely under his breath. She would not give up the lantern. Forethought saw with horror the rough hand of the ploughman clenched upon the young lady's wrist. Their eyes met in stormy, intimate anger. He cried out, pained by the struggle.

"Surely, if the young lady wishes. . . ."

"I do," said Jazan blandly, and the two set out together.

It was well into April. The Goose Common and the houses about it were obliterated by fog. Moon, stars, trees, the habitations of man—all were gone. Without form and void was the night, as was the universe before the Creation. The smell of it. The sticky buds. Rank-growing grass beneath the feet. From all about and everywhere came the eerie crying of the first tiny frogs. The muffled hiss of geese as they passed Preserved English's smithy. The suck of the mud upon their shoes. A dog barked from Orde's. The eye could make out nothing except the splash of gold light from the lantern, but to nostrils and ears the night was full of meaning. Forethought took a deep breath of the earthy air.

"Of course," said a voice beside him, "I know why both Goody and you wished Gervase to light you. It is an old trick of Mr. Redbank's. And there's no reason," she said bitterly.

"Then you know of this matter?"

"Yes." But she said no more. Never in Boston had he been lighted home by a lady of the house. Her courtesy slightly

embarrassed him. Why had she? She could not thus humble herself to protect a mere servant. Could it be because she desired this intimacy?

Her arm brushed against his in the dark. He laughed abruptly, although there was nothing to laugh at.

"I could hardly call you anything but Jazan now," he said, "for the Mistress Parre I actually saw in the lighted hall is gone. The night has left us nothing but our inner selves."

Hurriedly she was saying good night at the parsonage door. He stood a moment before entering, gazing after the lantern light receding from him through the fog. There was a pathos in its littleness on so black a night. We are all, he thought, as lanterns—and soon out.

5

TO whatever household came sickness or sorrow Mr. Fearing also came. He showed by his actions how Christ had humbled himself to the humble, and he said little. For the first time in his life he was loved more than feared. It was to Mr. Redbank his soul now clung as formerly it had to his father.

On the night of a drenching July storm word came to him that he was needed at Paradise. Old Goodman Goad had again fallen and broken his hip. In spite of his promises, Forethought had been but little to the great house. When he thought of Jazan she was always the starry-eyed, innocent child who (in a dream it is true) had first led him away from his father's faith and into the presence of Christ. But when with her he was disturbed. He faced the fact that he felt towards her much as men of commoner clay feel towards women. From youth up he had secretly vowed himself to celibacy. Christ himself had neither wife nor lover, so why should he? Hagar also disturbed

him. Her talk was always of his father and the greatness of his Fearing blood. He could not tell her, could tell no one but the old pastor, that upon his father had he turned his back. Nor could he tell even the pastor that sometimes in shutting out his father he felt he had shut God out as well. Christ's teachings—they were like a nebulous, golden haze. One floated in them but one's feet never touched the ground. Often he was homesick for the old days—so stern, so black and white, so sure.

The messenger, Gervase Blue, was a soaked and rakish figure standing in the Redbank kitchen, an old sack pulled over his head like a hood. For if your skin-drenched man does not look pathetic he looks rakish.

"We might wait a little, sir," he said. "I doubt if the Good-man gets back his senses in this world. 'Tis a frightful night to take any man into unless he be as used to foul weather as myself."

Forethought said he was ready to go and did not mention the agues, headaches, and chills that had been dogging him all day.

Gervase jumped into the saddle and bid the clergyman mount behind him. Rue Redbank held up a lantern. It cast an infernal light over the servant's cowed head, flashing on white teeth and eyes. Forethought paused. He had a woman's whittle (one of Rue's) pulled about him.

"Please mount, sir, and mind his heels." Gervase did not know there was any young man who could not spring to a horse's back without stirrup or mounting-block. Forethought would not admit his incapacity, and now that the rain whipped his face he felt like to swoon with headache and nausea.

"I think I'll walk."

"But you cannot walk!" The young voice was stern. Fearing

always irritated the servant, although he knew he had reason to be grateful to him. It was he who had told Goody Goad flatly that she was a meddlesome gossip, and the church would not take disciplinary steps and force marriage upon her two protégés.

At last Gervase got off, tied up Tobey's reins, and bade the horse go home by himself. He took Rue's lantern. Soon, even as he expected, it went out. Fearing was forced to take Gervase's arm, for although the servant seemed able to spy out the way, the gentleman could not see three inches before him. The rain came down like a waterfall.

"Peace be with this house," Forethought said on entering the kitchen, where a pallet had been made for the old man. And the faces of the watchers relaxed and miraculously a sense of peace came.

All guessed by the pinching of Farmer Goad's nose and the coldness of his extremities that he must die. Yet men do not die of broken hips. Why it was he now must die no one wondered. He had been bound to a plank so that his senseless turnings would not pain him. There was nothing to do but watch and wait.

When the brass-crowned clock upon the hall wall struck midnight, Goody Goad begged all to leave her, and she asked Jazan and Hagar to sleep that night in the great chamber with Bathsheba and give their room over to their weary guest. Forethought had slumped sidewise a little, his eyes were closed, his mouth pulled awry. He breathed with difficulty.

"Oh, sir . . . you are ill?" His eyes, bright and sunken, opened as he heard Jazan's voice.

"Ill?" He repeated the word foolishly. Like a child he let her lead him to his chamber. He collapsed heavily on the edge of the bed. She felt his shoulder. It was still damp from the

storm. His forehead was clammy with sweat. Gently she knelt before him, unbuckled his shoes, drew off the fine flax stockings. She went to the kitchen hearth and got hot bricks to wrap in flannel and lay at his feet.

On such a night as this she could not ask the Goodwife to nurse yet another invalid, and she believed herself as capable as any other woman of the household. She felt compassion and pity for him when at last he lay in her bed. His aching eyes were closed and turned away from the little light of the candle. He seemed a strange and lonely creature to her, and she guessed he had always been so and always would be. She pitied not only his sickness but the loneliness of his spirit. Her heart went out to him. She tenderly stroked the pale hair from his forehead. As she did so she realized she had always wondered how those seemingly metallic curls would feel under her hand. Soft as the coat of a spaniel. Her heart quickened, and she drew back ashamed as though she had taken advantage of his present weakness to discover a secret. His eyes did not open but he said her name.

"Yes, Forethought?" She had never thought to call him thus.

"My good angel," he whispered; and "Do not leave me," he said.

6

FORETHOUGHT FEARING lay sick to death of a congestion of the lungs.

All the English corn was ruined, and the flax that year would not be worth the breaking. Ploughed lands were seamed with gullies. One storm had ruined Gervase's first year of stewardship at Paradise. Of this and the Goodman's death Forethought knew nothing.

Goody Goad said that in such sickness the crisis would come

upon an odd day. If not the fifth then the seventh. If not the seventh then the ninth. It came upon the seventh, in a great flood of fever, rusty spittle upon broken lips, a groaning with every breath. It was a fearsome sight to see the fair young man so suffocating in the coils of his disease. There was nothing Jazan would not do to save his life, which now seemed part of her own. He talked wildly and much in Latin. Often he spoke of his "good angel." Hagar was much impressed that God had sent an angel to sit at his bed's head. She took it as a sign that soon he would escape his tortured body. Jazan knew of whom he thought and was determined that he should live.

At last the sickness turned, and every day he grew stronger. The tide of life ran fuller and fuller in him, and he gave himself over to his convalescence with a sensuous pleasure. Never had he eaten such food as was served at Paradise. Never had ale tasted so well brewed nor bread so sweet. Never had skies been so blue as the skies of that July nor bed so soft and deep to sleep upon. Even the water from the well sparkled with new life. The cocks that crowed in each new day had a different music to them from any he had heard before.

Wonderful to be alive!

Only one thing troubled him in his happy, dreamlike state. Once before he had been sick to death and that was when he was thirteen only. He had eaten some poisonous thing (no one ever knew what) and had been terribly wasted. Then, even as now, convalescence had come with its beautiful promises. But at that time the rapture of returning life had not deepened his sense of taste and smell nor made him more aware of the curve of a woman's mouth and throat, the delicate movements of her body. All his rapture had gone into a closer conviction of the presence of God. Why was it now when with a sigh of animal

content he lay himself down at night he thought of how well cooked the turkey had been that noon (stuffed with early apples and onions) and how rich the gravy! And tomorrow the Goodwife had promised a suckling pig with an apple in its mouth! And could it be he was more conscious of Jazan Parre than of God? It frightened him to see in what direction he was moving.

Often he wondered if he had not left God and his father behind him, not to find Christ (as he had hoped) but the delights of the body—the body that he had always looked upon as a stumbling-block for mortal man. Some time, if God did not help him, he would lose control of his poor, sinful body and take this woman in his arms, kiss and embrace her. She had a freedom of movement that at one moment seemed boyishly unaware and the next deliberately wanton. When he tried to talk seriously to her about the lusts of the body (hoping she was indeed his “good angel”), she laughed at him a little, knowing that she held him in her hand. Suppose, she said, man was not born evil as the Puritans said, but innocent. . . . Suppose there was no such thing as “original sin”? So he played with this thought which, when it came in later days to a stronger man, turned a world upside down.

Often he sat beside her under Yellow Clay’s great oak. The golden summer days, the ancient tree, the fair, wide-eyed woman all reminded him of the Garden of Eden, those lonely, lovely days before God created evil and the knowledge of it. What shame had Adam and Eve of their bodies? None until they fell. Life seemed simple and beautiful to him as though he and she were a new Adam and Eve and the rich river land of Paradise a new Eden.

But when late in August he returned to the parsonage he was frightened of what lay ahead of him. His body hungered

for the woman and he was ashamed. He had moments of revulsion when Jazan Parre did not seem the good angel he had once thought her, but woman, the ancient temptress, the seductress. He talked of this matter to Mr. Redbank, but the old man's mind would often wander. There is but one thing in this world, he said, and that is love. He remembered how his father would often say the word "love" should be kept only for the feeling of a man for God. Lust was the proper word for his feelings for a woman. "'Tis better," said the old man, "to marry than to burn." Forethought lifted his head proudly. Long ago he had decided that he would do neither. Such mean choice was not for men like himself. Was he now at last to be betrayed by his body? He had always felt that the dreams he had had of Jazan Parre she also dreamed, and this had been a bond between them. Now when he met her, thinking of his recent dreams, he flushed and turned away, fearing that she, too, might remember them. But at night, when he could not sleep, he would feel her hand upon his hair like the hand of a witch-woman, and rising suddenly he would spend the night in prayer.

One morning when, haggard and unrested, he went to the kitchen, there sat the old pastor in his donkey cart. "My son," he said, "do not fight against the body—for God made that as well as the soul," and he repeated the ugly lines about marriage being preferable to burning. At last Forethought broke down and wept and said that when Fenton Parre came back from England he would ask of him the hand of his sister. He spoke as a defeated man.

"And Jazan," said the old man, "what will she say to this?" Forethought in his egoism had never thought much of this matter. From his Boston days he had always believed any woman who might would accept him. He had no doubt now.

Forethought remembered this conversation as the last one he had with the actual Mr. Redbank. The old man did not die, but his mind went out. His saintliness departed. Now he did not seem like Saint John himself but an old spider wrapped in shawls as in a web. He could hardly bear to have his "son" out of his sight for a moment. Over and over Forethought promised never to leave him until the end. Greedily Mr. Redbank accepted this promise. But the young man was shocked that anyone could act so selfishly and at the same time prate so glibly about the Christian life. He nursed the old man tenderly, but his words about love seemed as simple and tedious to him as they had for over a year to many of his congregation.

7

ONE September day, as Forethought Fearing stepped out of the meeting-house where he had gone to escape for a few moments Mr. Redbank's demands, he saw a tall, broad-shouldered man standing bare-headed by the Parre burial-lot. Although at some distance he knew by the pose that it was Fenton Parre. He stole back into the meeting-house.

To accommodate the now three hundred inhabitants of Canaan, the meeting-house had lately been enlarged once again. The south end, which was new, was built without windows and of the heaviest oak logs—"but 'tis more like a fort than a house of God," he had complained to the Selected Men. They told him that this was as Captain Parre had advised. The time might come, even after all these years of peace with the Indians, when a fort was necessary. They intended to fortify the entire building with equal care. Little light, he saw, would come in except the light of God. He found that against the advice of the absent Captain Parre he could make no

headway, and had decided to wait until his return. Now Fenton was back. Now was the time to talk to him. It was not of this problem he thought, but only of Jazan. He had told Mr. Redbank he wished to wed her. In his own heart he was not sure.

Should he speak now or should he wait? If he waited Fenton would be gone. Jazan had told him she was sure he would never live at Paradise as long as Bathsheba was there. "Sir, in your absence I have come to regard your sister, nor do I believe that she is indifferent to me. May I have your permission to ask her to marry me?" Surely this was not hard to say. But his nature was like a democracy where everyone has a vote. Now it was seething like the Parliament in Charles I's reign, a babble and confusion of many voices—not one voice speaking out as it did in Fenton, and the rest falling into line. Often Forethought was forced through these stormy sessions with the parliament of his mind. It was hard for him to settle matters when all this voting was going on within him. He often would turn to the outside world—at best a sign from God, at worst the merest freaks of chance. Into Thy hands, Father . . . he prayed. Then he was conscious that he was not alone. Sitting quietly on a form close by the open door was Young Parre himself. Sensing his devotions ended, he walked forward to meet him.

"I saw you from where I stood by my father's grave. I wanted to make sure the stone I ordered from Boston had been fitly carved and set up." And he offered his hand.

"It is a handsome stone."

"I have just seen Mr. Redbank—what there is left of him. Is it true, as he tells me, you wish to marry with my sister, Jazan?"

The moment had come. Forethought blanched. "Yes, this is true, I think."

Fenton sat down and motioned with his hat for the clergyman to join him.

"I must beg of you not to continue with this idea. I have not forgotten the rancour both you and your father threw into that unfortunate affair of Bathsheba and my brother, although I believe, as Mr. Redbank tells me, you have changed since then—for the moment."

Fearing was touchy about the subject of his changeableness. "Why do you say for the moment?"

"I have never noticed men change much, no matter how hard they try. Once a Parre, always a Parre. Once a Fearing, always a Fearing." There was a new-found courtliness in Fenton's manner. "I am not asking you to give up this matter only because Fearings and Parres have never been friends, nor because I know you and I can never be as brothers, but because I am sure that you and Jazan will be unhappy together. I have always had her welfare at heart."

"How can you say that? You did not think of her, did you, when you sullied her innocence by using her as your intermediary between yourself and that false woman whom you eventually married?"

"It did her no harm. She was old enough to know what the world was like. In fact, she knew already."

"Did you have her welfare to heart when you went abroad and left her to her own devices? You and your father both gave permission to half the young men in Canaan to court her."

"I didn't think she would marry Mercuricus or Seth—and two is no half—but I thought it would keep her amused."

Forethought drew back in stiff disapproval.

"One of the things I intended to do as soon as I got back was to see to her marrying. I think I have found the very man for her. Jan Royalle. They have already met, and she seemed to have some liking for him. He's now in Boston and wishes to go into farming. He very much fancies my sister. He is well born and well-to-do. I should like having him here at Paradise."

At the thought of a rival, all doubt left Forethought's mind. "I will not withdraw my suit for Jazan, except at your express command. You cannot, merely because you want a farming brother-in-law, go against our feelings. I think we have loved each other for years." He broke off and added beligerently, "Do you command me to give up all thought of her?"

Fenton did not answer immediately. He had a little the look of a man who is counting ten.

"It would be very insulting if, without good reason, I peremptorily turned down a man of your breeding, wealth, and position. And I will admit that if the two of you are bound to rush upon destruction, I will suffer my consent. My approval I cannot give."

"Thank you—for this much encouragement."

Fenton paid no heed to the sarcasm of the tone.

"'Tis not encouragement. I will do all I can to turn my sister's mind as well as yours. And is it true that you have promised to stay on at the parsonage as long as Mr. Redbank lives? I will not consent that my Jazan be added to that muddled and crowded household. You must be content to wait, either for another change in the old gaffer or his death."

"We will wait," Forethought cried.

"One thing more. By my father's will, Jazan and whomever

she marries and whatever she may bear will have the right to dwell forever at Paradise. My father saw that she alone amongst his children had great love for her old home. That is one reason I should like a farming brother-in-law. How should you like to live at Paradise?"

"I would live . . . I would live in Hell to be with her."

Fenton laughed. "That's just what it may be. How should you like living there?"

"I have tried it for over a month already. I think it is beautiful."

"Ay—with Tobey begetting his colts in the barn-yard and the hens getting into the kitchen to lay their eggs."

With a nod he was on his feet and was gone.

Curious, that parting shot about Tobey. Forethought almost hated the creature. In his month at Paradise he had learned that Tobey's service fees went to Fenton's two sisters as pin-money. Even Hagar was not so delicate but she kept close track of his amours, for she wished to buy a copy of Peter Fearing's sermons with her share. He felt a deep antipathy for the sturdy stallion. Tobey stood for everything he disliked at Paradise.

8

FENTON seemed determined to make his stay at Paradise as short as might be. He had certain business to transact, and when this was done properly he would be gone back to Boston. During his stay in England he had pushed through several business matters for his brother-in-law, Jonathan Fayrweather. On his return a partnership was offered him. For many years he had sold furs through the Fayrweathers. He was already allied to them by marriage. He intended, if only

he could manage his affairs at Paradise, to live the rest of his life in Boston.

He seemed to have changed much in his nine months abroad. When Jazan remembered the careless rowdy he had been the last night he had spent at home, she almost regretted the change. Then he had had no heed for anyone's welfare. All he had wished was to enjoy himself, to forget the misfortune of his marriage in sack-posset, flip, and good company.

She saw that he had prepared a list for himself, and when one thing was done he checked it off, as though he was all prosperous merchant and no longer a wild Indian trader.

The first morning he gave entirely to Gervase Blue, going over the estate inch by inch, commenting upon the new work undertaken by his twenty-year-old steward, and understanding the tragedy of the great rain storm in July which had washed out fields of grain and ruined all the flax. Gervase told him how he had indeed taken a gamble by putting so much land to the delicate flax. One night had ruined it all.

Fenton said, "But if the rains hadn't come just as they did, you would have made me a fortune. I believe a man should take a chance now and then. Try it again next year."

He had supper at Founder's and looked with some amusement at the twin boys, Jake and Varney. He could not admire them much in spite of their mother's praise. Christopher was still absorbed in his Indian dialects. At times he seemed to have forgotten he was a branded man. Yes, he was well pleased to have his land farmed as though it were still a part of Paradise. He would have liked to have been a farmer to please Salome (Fenton noticed that he patted her tired hand), but that he could not be, and she understood.

He was at home when Miller Blue came to him and asked if he would permit his Abraham to wait upon Hagar. Fenton

said Abraham might "wait," but there was to be no talk of marriage for three years yet.

He reduced Goody Goad to tears by the magnificence of the gravestone he ordered for the Goodman's grave.

He gave Phoebe a lecture. Since her complete and rather public rebuff by Gervase, Phoebe had got more out of hand than ever. She still, in her own way, loved the steward and she was sure that in time he would marry her. Had not Goody Goad again and again said Gervase would come to see it was the thing to do? She left Gervase severely alone, although she would sometimes sigh heavily when she set down his meat before him. Now she was unconsciously trying to arouse his jealousy by attracting the admiration of the other men-servants—bachelors and young every one.

"You will find yourself a mother before you are a wife, if you don't watch out, Phoebe," her master told her. She was heart-broken at this rather undeserved reprimand and for weeks did only half her usual amount of work.

If Jazan had read Fenton's list, she would have seen that now only two items remained.

Jazan. Fearing.

Bath.

He hardly seemed himself at all, but he did seem a powerful and considerate head of the house. Perhaps Mr. Redbank's words at his father's coffin were bearing fruit.

At first she was surprised that he was in so dawdling a mood as to suggest to her to go fishing upon Long Pond the third afternoon of his return. Then she guessed. It was now her turn, and he wished to be sure of privacy. She was almost afraid of this business-like, reserved Fenton who had come back from England. She understood the half-naked blackguard in Indian drawers better.

He found the Indians' birch-bark canoe hidden in the hollow of a dead chestnut tree and carried it to the gravelly beach of Long Pond. A dozen strong strokes and they were out in the blaze of the September sun. Jazan waited for Fenton to speak. He caught two bass, a number of yellow perch, and then a gigantic pickerel.

"I have," he said, "a favour to ask of you. Tomorrow I ride away, and after I am gone I want you to talk with Bathsheba."

"What, then, Fenton?"

"I want you to tell her that she is no longer my wife."

"You married her, didn't you? And when you might have repudiated her, you took her back."

"She is not my wife—for the good reason that she was already married when she married me. It was this way. In London I found her stepfather's shop. He was frightened when he learned who I was. He told me as little as might be, but I did get from him the name of the Dorset squire—who, you remember, would not marry her just before she came over? So I went to Dorset."

"What did you find?"

"He did not marry her because two days before the wedding her true husband made himself known to him."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

He drew papers from his pocket. "Here is the sealed and attested copy from the Parish Registry at Oxford. When she was seventeen she married a scholar, one Roger Bliss. You see? Her name and his. She, set down as Bathsheba Holmes, spinster of St. Paul's Churchyard. He, a bachelor senior sophist of Magdalen. He was poor and dissolute. The story that lay behind this marriage I did not get. But this Bliss had sunk so low as to be working about the Mitre as a porter.

I went to the Mitre. Everyone there remembered him. He had died but shortly before I got there. And it was the same man. I always knew Bathsheba had something to hide from me. And she never meant to take that boat back to England. Do you remember the taking she was in when she knew I was going to London? She feared I would learn. And so I have."

"But what will happen to Bathsheba?"

"I will repudiate her."

"Turn her out of doors? You cannot! I do not like her . . . I never have—but she has been in a terrible predicament and has borne it well. Now, this will kill her. Won't her stepfather take her back?"

"He will not."

"And that brand upon her forehead! Where would she go?"

"She can stay on here and work under Goody Goad for her keep. She is now indeed a widow. I want you to tell her to look about for some man, not too fine, who will marry her. I'll pay a decent dowry."

"Do you forget how much you once cared for her?"

"I do not forget. Now I want you, as soon as I am away, to slip the idea into her head that I know the truth about her . . . and that I am planning soon to marry another."

"Oh, Fenton, who?"

"She is our Governor Bellingham's grand-niece. She was travelling with an elderly aunt and uncle upon the same *Sea Queen* I came back upon. They were too sea-sick to mind her much." For a moment he laid aside his fishing tackle and told a little of his "Star." All her life had been spent with elderly people. Her parents were old when she was born, and soon dead. Then she had gone to live with her grandparents, and they were very old. Oh, she waited upon them! Fixed pap

for grandpa, helped grandma in and out of her pony chaise, and never guessed there was another life. Star learned all about the life of the old; rheumatism and red flannels and soft foods; nothing about the life of young men and women. So she seemed like a nun from a cloister. . . . "Not at all, Jazan," he said at last, looking at his sister, "what you would expect me to pick out for myself. She is so very young, reserved, and a little severe in her manner."

"How old is she?"

"Fifteen only."

"Nobody of fifteen ought to marry a man like you. Have you spoken to Mr. Bellingham about this—child?"

"She spoke—as soon as she saw him on the dock. I tell you, she is very determined."

"And I suppose she loves you with her whole heart?"

"With her whole heart—yes."

He put one more gasping fish upon the forked stick and picked up his paddle. After Bathsheba, after the lascivious ladies of Charles II's court, with their bare bosoms and rosy thighs, Estella Bellingham had taken him unawares. He smiled as he thought of the odd, demure child, with mouse-coloured bangs reaching to slender arched brows, serious eyes looking out from beneath. He guessed that she herself did not know whether her thighs were white or rosy.

"I must be getting old, Jazan, to be so attracted by youth, innocence, and the virgin heart."

He knew that he was the first man ever to impinge upon this little "Star" Bellingham's soul, and this fact he thought would bind her to him, and him to her. Towards the end of the long voyage he had tried to tell her a little of himself. Partly he told because he was honest; partly because he thought his false marriage to Bathsheba might make trouble

for them; and partly a perverse desire to arouse something human within her—jealousy even. Such adoration and trust hardly seemed human.

He told her of Bathsheba. She fixed her pale eyes upon his face, made a few intelligent comments, agreed that it was now his duty to dower the poor woman, offered some of her own great fortune for the purpose—and that was all.

He told her of Johnny Pigge, and how at last this unfortunate young harlot had escaped the cruelty of the white men and had married an Indian (although few among the whites knew this). She shook her head and sighed, as though saying to herself, "Young people will be young people." Fenton might as well, he thought, have told her of the strange mating habits of the elephant as of his own.

He laid down the paddle and baited his hook. "I intend to deal fairly with this little Star," he said, "and will be a proper merchant partner of Fayrweather and Parre. We will buy the old Macey house upon High Street." He laughed abruptly. "We looked it over together. She put her fingers about the windows and said, 'But there's a draught.' Half was it like having an ancient dame upon your hands, her mind is so set on those things important to the old. And fifteen only! But she knows her mind and exactly what she wishes to have done. She may announce these decisions in the smallest voice, but they are decisions. I'll never ride roughshod over *her*! Nor do I so wish, but only to please her. Jazan, my days of Indians and trading are done. 'Tis a life for a boy—not for a grown man. I'm twenty-eight. And those months I spent in our King's court did something to me. Something truly of the Puritan I seemed in that close and fetid atmosphere. They made much of me. I was so new a thing to them—almost as though I were a Tawny myself—and yet they knew my grand-

father was a Kentish knight. I was the god Mars in one of their masques, with fine gold armour and three ladies—all but naked—to attend me, and the King's mistress draped about me for Venus."

"Were they very beautiful, these court ladies?"

"Fair enough, but mincing and mawkish. Bathsheba copies their manner well. Everything, these days, must be gallantly done; from the way a lady puts on her hat to the way she dismisses a lover. . . . 'La, sir—be gone. 'Tis day!'" he mimicked.

"And you came up out of that and met Star—as you call her?"

"Ay. I came up and there was Star."

9

JAZAN could not find the proper words of congratulation. She let him fish on in silence, which at last he broke.

"But 'twas not alone court ladies I saw, nor merchants for Mr. Fayrweather. I was mostly about with military men. Governor Bellingham wishes me chief of the Boston forts. This will make me a major. I tried to tell him that 'tis not our seaports we should fortify against the French and the Dutch, but every frontier village against the Indians."

"I cannot believe that they will ever rise up against us."

"I cannot believe that they will not. Plymouth Colony is once more having trouble with that King Philip of theirs."

"But that is Plymouth, and far away. . . ."

"If Philip and his Wampanoags rise up, will the Narragansetts join with him? The Mohawks, the Tarratines, what's left of the Pequots? Our own Nipmucs?"

"They hate each other even more than they hate us."

"Yes, this is still true. But will it be true forever? We have taken their hunting lands to plough. We kill off their game, and yet forbid them English arms. Of course they have them. With one hand we forbid them strong drink, and with the other we give it them. So everything we have done has been which-way and wrong. Oh, I see nothing for them but to become the farm servants and labourers authority wishes, move on to the west—yet the west is already settled with their enemies—or to fight it out with us, while yet there's time. If I were they, I'd fight it out! Never would I stand by and watch the white men setting up always more stone walls, more churches and towns, and breeding our huge families."

With some enthusiasm, he drew up a campaign for the Tawnies.

"If they could but work together and begin on the outskirts, they could exterminate us all. But they will not, Jazan. They'll begin in Plymouth Colony. If only they had one sharp military mind among them!"

"They should have you for their general."

"If they did, they might win. But they have not. So I should prefer to be given a roving commission to go about the towns and prepare for Indian warfare. Our meeting-house, for instance. Half of it now is a very fair garrison. I'll see the Selected Men about the other half's being fortified before I go back."

"That reminds me. Mr. Fearing takes it hard that you have persuaded the Selected Men so to fortify our meeting-house. It is, as he says, primarily a house of God, and . . ."

"Thank God *you* reminded *me*! I'd all but forgot the greatest meat of this meeting."

"I've heard enough," said Jazan, "to hold my stomach for days to come."

"I gather you have gone your own way in my absence."

"What do you mean?"

"As soon as you mentioned Mr. Fearing's name, I remembered that he has asked your hand of me. He spoke as though the matter was all but settled between you."

Jazan's face was amazed. "I cannot believe you. There has been no talk of our marrying."

"Love, only?"

"Not a word of love. 'Tis true we have some regard for each other, but—I suppose it is the memory of something he once said to me—I did not think it was marriage he had in mind."

"Well, so it is."

"Surely you are inventing this?"

"Not I. Mr. Redbank told me how for a month and more Fearing has but been waiting my return. So, seeing the fellow, I taxed him with it."

Jazan's face was ashamed. "I wish you had not taxed him, no matter what he may have said to Mr. Redbank. I do not understand. . . ." Never had she thought of Forethought Fearing as a husband. She could not. "Oh, why did you blurt the matter out?"

"I wish to clear the woods a little for my own candidate."

"Your candidate?"

"Young Royalle."

"That girl-faced boy? Never!"

"He's no girl, in spite of that skin like milk and roses and lashes an inch long. He's a stout fellow. But I'll never drive you. If you want Forethought Fearing, or anyone else of good position and barely sufficient birth, I will consent."

"What did you say to Mr. Fearing?" she asked curiously.

"Nothing much. I could not, without grave discourtesy, tell

a man of his position that he was not permitted to court my sister. After all, Father gave permission to the riff-raff of Canaan." (Yes, he had changed. Seth, the Younger, Mercuricus English—they had not been "riff-raff" to him before he went abroad.) "So I gave permission. He wanted my approval. That I could not give."

"But why not, Fenton?"

"I'll never be able to like him. You forget how the Fearings, father and son, whipped up popular feeling against Bathsheba and Kit. But that was not the main point, as I told him. Once a Parre, always a Parre. Once a Fearing, always a Fearing. And they do not mix."

"He hardly is a 'Fearing' any more. I think it is Mr. Redbank's influence upon him. He is no longer the man you used to know. All that has been supplanted by something else . . . something he never can get the words for—but 'tis the very spirit of Christ."

"Yes, I too heard him talking about Christ, and looking like a fool, at the time of the branding. And he will always be changing. And always change back to what he was."

"Do you think he is weak?"

"Yes—I think he is weak. If I were a woman, I would rather be married to a strong brute than to a weak saint. She'd have a hard life with either but more fun with the brute."

Jazan was sitting upright in the canoe. Her eyes blazed. "I think he is the strongest man I've ever known. Oh, I don't mean *animal* strength—like yours and Tobey's."

"Ha, there's a fish for you." And he pulled in and threw away a miserable little kiver. "I think he is weak and unstable. And I warn you now, Jazan, if you marry him, you will regret it. I will not command you—except this far: I do think you must marry someone—and soon. Nineteen is over-old to

be unwed, and you've proved captious and hard to suit. What do you think women are made for? And much pains were taken in your making, Jazan." As far as she could remember this was the first compliment she had ever heard from her brother.

There was a soft "hollo" from the gravel spit from which they had floated the canoe. It was Gervase Blue calling to him. The sad vowels of the call echoed against the shallow hills. Jazan bowed her head, as though it were a blow.

Fenton paddled for the beach. Soon his canoe was hissing among the reeds.

"What news?"

"A man from Boston, rid out to see you."

"Jan Royalle? I expected him."

"So it is."

Fenton grinned at Jazan, bade her follow him, and left his servant to put away the canoe.

IO

GERVASE carried the canoe, and Jazan followed with the paddle. She found this slight weight almost more than she could bear. Her bones did not seem put together with sinews but with water. Gervase fitted the canoe neatly into the heart of the dead chestnut. "I'll go back for the fish," he said, "and overtake you." She doubted he'd overtake her. For months now he had shown a blind instinct to avoid her in all ways. She sat herself on a dead limb fallen from the tree. She could smell lake water and hear it lapping among the reeds. She smelt mushrooms and leaf-mould and the ferns her feet crushed. She put her face in her hands and waited her ser-

vant's return. She heard his feet stop before her, but she did not look up.

"Will you sit for a moment?" Now she knew what she must do—be it bold or maidenly, it did not matter. He sat himself as far apart from her as he might and still share the tree limb with her. It was as though he feared to find himself thus alone with her by the deserted lake side.

"What is it—Mistress?"

"You did not use to call me 'Mistress.' "

"But so you are. And 'tis well we both remember."

She thought of him as she had first known him: the ragged child servant at the mill, and the dignity he had always had in spite of Goody Blue; of how, always in longing, his eyes were fastened upon Paradise. Then he had come to work for her father, and they had been for a short time only as children together. They had hunted eggs in the barns, thrown snowballs, weeded flax, been stung by bees, picked wild grapes, and read together in the long evenings. There had been no thought of servant and mistress until that fatal time they had overheard Agnes talking with her father. Then both realized there was a barrier between them. With the coming of the barrier, love came. But there could be no honourable expression for such love as theirs, and so—silent and hopeless—it had pressed down, concentrating into a poison which had harmed them both. For Jazan had lost the easy trustfulness and open-heartedness of her childhood. She had, in the last three years, become silent and a little remote. Gervase worked over-hard and kept himself too much from his fellows. Yet thrice every day these two sat together at table-board. Their eyes would meet and drop again, and they rarely spoke. Yet it was the servant—not the mistress—who kept this decent decorum. Jazan, although she knew no marriage could

there be for them, resented the silence and self-control of the young servant. She wanted his reserve to break, wanted him to say in words what his eyes said. He would not, and now that at last he sat thus alone with her, she saw that he was afraid.

She raised her eyes and spoke bluntly, "If I were a poor serving-maid, would you marry me?"

"Yes." He tried to smile, but grimaced.

"If you were a landed man?"

Why do you ask?"

"If you were rich, and I poor?"

He nodded. He was miserable.

"But as things are, you will not?"

"You mean, I cannot."

"If you put love before pride, you could."

"It has been done before," he said bitterly. "Servants have seduced their master's sisters and marriage has been preferred to a bastard. Do you think, Jazan, I am that sort of faithless servant?"

"No," she said. "I suppose that is why I love you. Honour will always come first. And love second?"

"Yes."

"Then you are not as I am. Oh, Gervase, I love you so. . . ." She put out a hand to him, but he turned away.

"Well, at least I have asked you, and you have answered me. There is never hope we might come by marriage honourably?"

"I have thought and thought. . . . In time, in years to come, it might be. . . . Jazan, could you wait for me ten years, or fifteen, say? By then I might have made something of myself. Folk might forget that I have no name of my own, only the name of my first master. I have-thought that if, perhaps, the

Indians do rise up, there will be a chance for me. In times of war they say good men rise fast to the top. Then we might speak of this again."

"Ten years," she cried, laughing wildly, "fifteen years—twenty years! No, no—by then I shall be married to another."

"But I will not, Jazan. I will live a lone man all my life, because I cannot have you."

"And because I cannot have you, I will marry Forethought Fearing!"

"Dear, do not be so foolish! You are nineteen only—wait a little."

"But I must get free of you. Oh, you have been a load upon my heart—and I upon yours! We have sat too long under a spell. If you will not break it, then I will. And I will be a good wife to Mr. Fearing. Half I think I am ready to love him already. I knew it first when he lay sick abed and my hand touched his hair. For I need love and I know it, so ready am I to love. But first I had to rid myself of you."

"And this talk between us . . . it has rid you of me?"

"A little, yes. You are so cautious, Gervase. I said I loved you because honour will always mean more to you than love. This isn't true. Almost it makes me hate you, for I have humbled myself to you. I feel like a child who jumps from a hayrick, never doubting but his father will catch him. So I jumped, Gervase—and you did not catch me." And "Leave me now," she said. "I'll question and beg you no more. Never again. I go my way as best I may. And you—go you yours. Go away now, Gervase—back to Paradise. . . ." And she was sobbing, her face once more in her hands, her body rocking back and forth.

So he went and left her.

II

JAZAN at first refused to tell Bathsheba, but finally she consented. She hoped to handle the matter more delicately than Fenton had time or inclination. When he had been gone for half a day, she found Bathsheba alone in her own chamber. She had a basin of water beside her and a comb, and before her a little looking-glass. She was trying in a listless way to arrange her curls. She squared her light jaw and turned her head away, as Jazan dropped down beside her upon the bed.

"Fenton found out?"

Jazan nodded.

"When did he tell you?"

"Yesterday afternoon, while we were fishing."

"I knew," said Bathsheba calmly, wetting her silver comb in the red earthenware basin. "I knew as soon as he came into the kitchen that first day. Did you notice he did not call me 'wife,' but 'Bathsheba' only?"

The poor woman looked almost ugly, and her face had lines over it as though someone had drawn a thread over a ball of wax. The purple *A* stood out in all its horror.

"Your first husband—that is, your *husband*—is dead. He died some months ago."

"Poor Roger! Did Fenton see him?"

"No. He died before he got to Oxford."

"I'm glad of that. I couldn't have borne to think Fenton saw him—as he became. Jazan, you must take my word for it, he was the handsomest lad when he married me. 'Twas on a May Day, and folk said we looked like the King and Queen of May. But my father (he was alive then) took me away. Do you think Fenton will want to marry me now I am a widow?"

"I'm sure he won't."

"But he seduced me!" she cried passionately. "For what do you call it when a man lives with a woman for I don't know how many years under the name of marriage?"

Jazan started to say she supposed it was called bigamy on the woman's part, but she had a new sympathy for the lady and said nothing.

"He said I was to tell you—if you can find a proper man for yourself he will see to your dowering."

"Why won't he marry me himself? You are keeping something from me."

In a little time it came out. Fenton wanted to marry another. Jazan was amazed at the change that came over Bathsheba, who had borne up at the beginning with much dignity. She flew into a frenzy of rage, not at the faithless Fenton, but at the fifteen-year-old child she had never seen. Her face turned livid with hate. Her hands clenched.

"I'll kill her," she choked. Cunning came into her eyes. She grasped her sister-in-law's knees. "Goody Goad—she'll give me some medicine. I'll put a blight upon them. There are hundreds of ways old women have for cursing the marriage bed. And I'll curse it for them."

"Goody is no witch. It takes a witch to do such things, and we have none such in Canaan."

"Haven't we though? I'll tell you one thing. If the Devil ever does come, I'll sign his book fast enough. . . ." Her mind wheeled about. "And Christopher and Salome . . . I hate them both. Founder's House is *my* house. Mr. Parre gave it to Fenton and me—what are *they* doing there? It is *my* house. And those twin babies of Salome's . . . they ought to be *my* babies. . . . Oh, Jazan, I haven't any child of my own . . . I haven't any child. Why has Salome two? And Fenton

. . . I suppose this minx of his is with child, now, by him. Everybody but me. . . .”

She fell into such a frenzy Jazan feared she was mad and ran to fetch the Goodwife.

And so Bathsheba slept no longer in the great chamber under the silken canopy that Mr. Parre had bought in Venice. Jazan slept there, and Hagar had the little chamber. Bathsheba would have been put in the attic room with Jessie and Phoebe, but Jazan begged of Goody and she was given Fenton's and Christopher's old room. The boys' discarded boots and books, bear traps and fishing tackle, still were about. And nailed upon the wall was a moth-eaten beaver skin that Fenton had trapped as a boy and always kept because of the curious streak of white on one flank. Upon the floor was a wolfskin. There were arrow-heads Tonic's father, Chicken-Chuck, had made of stag-horn for his neighbour's sons. A strange room for a fastidious lady. She looked about her blindly, and never attempted to change it to suit her own temper. Now she was expected to work every day and all day long in the kitchen, the dairy, the still, or the loom room. At first Jazan objected to this. Bathsheba had always been so idle and fine. But the Goodwife told her the poor woman's only chance for a happy life was to mend her lazy ways and become a neat housewife. Otherwise not even a poor man would marry her, for Fenton could not be planning to give a large dowry.

Bathsheba herself seemed at last ready to learn what the Goodwife had to teach her, but she was pathetically clumsy, always cutting herself with a knife or losing down-stream the clothes she attempted to wash in the river. Now there was no talk of her sitting at the head of the table. She sat below the salt, with Phoebe and Jessie. She walked last into the pew

on Sabbath. She still held her head high but most of the time she was silent. When she talked it was impossible to stop her—especially if Mr. Fearing was present. To him she always wished to confess her sins. Her slightly contemptuous smile might seem to a casual eye unchanged, but it had grown vacant.

She took little care to draw her curls over her forehead and was often untidy. Any spare time she might get from her labours (and the Goodwife was not cruel to her), she wandered off into the woods. Partly to get the work out of her and partly in kindness, Goody Goad taught her the common wild herbs—St. John's-wort, nightshade, dittany, and rue—and the London lady could often be seen with an old whittle over her head, plodding through marshes and kine walks hunting for the medicinal herbs.

I 2

JAZAN was so restless she felt unable to sit quietly to her work but paced back and forth through the house and out of doors, knitting viciously at a pair of stockings. She miscounted her stitches and did not rectify them. She dropped others and did not pick them up. Then Forethought presented himself—neat and gentlemanly in his habitual black silk. His air of decorous urbanity slightly irritated the girl. She herself was dressed as a country-woman: barefooted and barelegged. Her short linsey-woolsey petticoat was mealy coloured. Her bodice, which laced before and behind, was scarlet; and the shift which showed at the throat and upon the arms was not of the sheerness suitable to her station, but coarse, greyish linen made from the third or fourth carding of the flax.

"You are late come, sir," she said, and her knitting needles clicked.

Ever since Fenton had given his half-hearted assent to Mr. Fearing's suit the gentleman had presented himself daily to his lady. It was only three o'clock. He was not late come. Early come if anything, he thought, for Mistress Parre had not found time to lay aside her working clothes and dress herself finely. She threw the knitting impatiently upon a form in the hall. Jessie, the smiling Scottish servant, was standing before the wool-wheel. Not once had Jazan and Fearing been alone since Fenton had said this man might speak for himself. Meeting always indoors, there had been no privacy—especially as Hagar and Bathsheba were both so avid for their clergyman's instruction. Nor was there now. Both had the same thought.

The girl brushed back her roughened dark hair and spoke rapidly. She wished him to walk with her to a swamp far out on Great Commons. She would show him a wild cat's den, she said. Forethought was amazed but anxious to please her. Then she turned upon him and laughed ruefully. "But surely not, sir, as now you are dressed."

It ended with Forethought's changing into old clothes of Fenton's. Almost blushing, he presented this new version of himself to his young lady's approval. He had on reddish leather breeches and leggings, a faded blue shirt open at the throat, and neither waistcoat, jerkin, or coat to cover it. The coarse, manly clothing suited well with his height and goodly form and gave the finely turned head a new beauty. Jazan had never before seen him dressed as other young men dressed, and he seemed closer than a fastidious young clergyman in neat, costly black ever could.

"But surely, Jazan," he said, "you will need stockings and

shoes? The way may be muddy. Should you not put on clogs?"

Jazan laughed at him. Feet, she said, were easier to clean than shoes, and they cost naught and never wore out. As for clogs—those were designed for the mincing marmaleet dames of Boston! As she spoke he glanced at her feet and was surprised that anything so slim could look so strong.

Together they crossed the river and went uphill into the Great Commons. There were cattle paths to follow. They pushed through blueberry and blackberry tangles which tore Jazan's bare legs. And the sun above them warmed the fragrance of sweet fern and bayberries. Golden-rod and asters and the scarlet of the sumach bushes coloured the pasture with autumnal tones. After more than a mile the kine paths ended. Jazan turned to the right and downwards and led the wondering man into a vast, still cedar swamp. Here it was always dark and dank, but at this time of year passable to knowing feet.

Jazan's hair caught on twigs and tumbled about her scarlet shoulders. Her milly petticoat was torn. Still she led the way, on and on with nimble feet and glowing eyes. At last they came to a dry knoll. It was here, she said, ten years before, she had come with her brothers. At that time cats had lived in yonder den—but not now.

She flung herself upon the ground. All about them was the gloomy swamp, lumped with dried marsh grass, choked with the white skeletons of fallen trees, slithering with snakes. Never had Fearing seen so evil a spot. He flung himself beside her.

Without a word they were in each other's arms. Jazan had never imagined that this moment would come nor dreamed how it was his mouth would feel against hers nor that his scholarly arm would be so strong about her. Once she had

idly thought that kissing him would be much like taking an oath upon the Bible, as folk did in England. She found he was only as other men, knowing by animal instinct (surely not by practice) how to win the woman that he wished.

Then, after a little, he gently brushed back the streaming hair from her candid, childlike forehead and asked her was he acceptable to her as a husband. She was not sure, she said. She must wait and think for a little. He was not disappointed that she did not rise immediately to his bait.

Still, that evening in his bedchamber at the parsonage, it seemed strange that although she could not say she was ready to marry him, she had shown no hesitation in accepting embraces, the memory of which made him go cold all over. He did not like to think how they had dallied upon the ground like a couple of courting rustics. The torn petticoat, which a few hours before had seemed bewitching, now slightly offended him. And how had his mouth, arms, hands, all known their part without direction from the brain? He had not known that it was thus the bodies of men and women melt together. He had heard of such things. Lust, it was called in sermons—what was it in life?

There seemed no connection between the young maid who had met him two years ago upon Blackstone's Point—or the child, five years ago, who used to gaze at him with great and silent eyes—and this lissom nymph of beast haunt and wildwood. Nor was she the quiet young gentlewoman who had nursed his sickness and had sat many hours beside him under Yellow Clay's oak—stitching, spinning, weaving.

He decided he would wait a three-day before he went again to Paradise. He was there next day. And gently Jazan sat beside a window in the hall. Rain lashed the tiny leaded panes. Her lids lay quietly over eyes that the day before had flashed

at him. Here seemed a sober enough good woman to share life with a minister.

But every now and then a fit of wildness would come over her, and would he or not, he must share it with her. He began to lose weight. The old nervous twitching came again under his left eye. Yet back he went to her, always once more.

So September gave way to October, and then November. The days shortened and darkened.

In November Fenton Parre was to marry Estella Bellingham. And the folk at Paradise made their preparations to go up to Boston.

13

CHRISTOPHER stood at the door of Founder's and looked across the river. He saw the train of six horses that would carry the wedding-guests. He could hear his sons squalling as his wife fitted them into panniers hung across the front of her saddle. Once he heard Jazan's laugh. She would go, and Hagar as well. And Goody Goad and Gervase Blue. But Bathsheba—she would not go. Nor would he show his brand again to Boston. For ten days she would be at Paradise and he alone at Founder's, with only the river to separate them.

He went into his house. It was the first time, since his marriage two years ago, Salome had been away for a night. Going into the empty house he got a sense of adventure. It was as if he had never quite seen it before. He put away the twins' double cradle. He took down the diapers drying before the hearth. With a sigh of contentment, he sank down in a chair and almost immediately he forgot Salome. The quiet of the house without the babies' screams and laughter or his wife's persistent shrill voice or the country giggles of the serving-maid (who had been allowed to visit her mother for

this week) soothed him. So Fenton was marrying, was he? And would live in Cousin Macey's old house on High Street, which had been bought with part of the bride's ample dower. There had been much talk of the changes the young girl had ordered. The shop had been made over into a carriage-house. For she must have a carriage. She was not the one to ride abroad on a pillion behind husband or servant. Again and again Christopher had heard the words, "Star must have so-and-so, or this-and-that." There was no talk of what Fenton (and now a major, commanding all the forts of Boston) wished. It would seem as if Fenton had at last met his match in a miss barely turned sixteen.

Salome had arranged that Phoebe was to come over from Paradise, prepare his meals, and make his bed. She had explained, again and again, exactly how it was Mr. Christopher liked his gruel. He liked rye but not injun. He preferred wild game to stall-fed meat. Spiced eels were his detestation. But when Phoebe arrived he told her he preferred to prepare his own food. He was to be left alone.

He shut himself in his study and went on with his Vocabulary of the Algonquin Language. And he was well content.

Towards nightfall, Billy Bright brought over a crock of milk. He drank this and ate some bread for his supper. The house, silent and empty of all but himself, relaxed him. He was nodding by eight, and at nine he was in bed.

For a week he saw no one to speak to but the lad Billy Bright and old Clara-Wood-Tree from Swamp Town. He had found that she was the best of the Swamp Town Indians for his purpose. Like a great sow, she would squat on his study floor, smoke her pipe, and scratch her vermin.

"Clara," he would say, "why do you Indians have two words

for turtle? *Hanawa* is the word I learned as a lad, and yet you say *hadimides* as well."

Then she would explain in her stupid way and in her own tongue that the first is just a turtle but the second word means "they who have upright necks." To call a man a *hanawa* is an insult—but *hadimides* a compliment.

"And why have you five words for corn?" He saw, as she explained these common things, that the language, which at first had seemed a veritable savage tangle, had both delicacy and strength. It was Clara who would always terminate these visits. Suddenly she would get up from the far corner where she squatted, put out her paw for a copper coin, grunt, and leave him. And the next day she would come back. If he did not use her she would sit for hours without speaking—smoking and scratching. Tonic had not proved as useful to him as old Clara. The young sachem was too restless and too absent-minded. Christopher guessed he actually did not know the language of his fathers as well as did the low-born squaw. Then he always wanted a drink for his pains. Twice of late, Colonel Coffin had set him in the stocks for drunkenness. Gossip said that one of his wives was Johnny Pigge, but when the Constable and the Judge had come to question, Tonic had slyly hidden the Cornish girl and produced another young woman. So it was well known the sachem had two wives, but the Colonel had dismissed as only gossip the story that one of these was a renegade white woman.

On the ninth day of his solitude, shortly after Clara had taken her coin and gone, Christopher began to wonder if bread and cheese were enough for his supper. The cheese seemed over-ripe to him. He held it close to his tilted girlish nose and carefully sniffed it. There was a sharp knock on the kitchen door. This surprised him, for the door was open. He turned

about, the stinking cheese in his hands. Bathsheba stood before him.

Since Fenton had repudiated her (and paid the heavy fine demanded by the General Court for her bigamy) and she had become a servant in the house where once she had been mistress, Bathsheba had grown slack in her dress. Her jumps were often old and broken, her petticoats soiled, and her hair untended. But for this visit she had put on the gorgeous gown of dark rust silk which matched her hair and brought out the porcelain fairness of her skin. True, her hands looked a little red and rough, but her arms and bosom were of alabaster.

He could not find the words to tell her that her presence was unwanted, but this was the truth. She had been something in his life—at least in the life of a man also called Christopher Parre—but that was long ago. Seeing her like this, beautiful and handsomely dressed, something of his old longing rose in him. He could not ask her in—not into Salome's house, in Salome's absence—and his loyalty to his wife was stronger than this resurgent emotion towards Bathsheba.

She did not look at him but turned her head and gazed thoughtfully at the river. He could see that perfect little profile.

"I thought I should like to see Jake and Varney. When Salome is here, she is so fond over them she won't even let me touch them."

"But didn't you know? Salome took them to Fent . . . to Boston with her."

"No, I did not know. I thought they were here with you."

There had been so much talk about the wisdom of taking these nine-months-old babies to Boston Christopher could hardly believe that Bathsheba had heard nothing of it. He was nonplussed and fiddled nervously with the wooden latch of the door. But he had often seen Bathsheba in the last few

months, unspeaking and unspoken to, wandering about the kitchen of Paradise. He wondered how much she listened to what was said.

"I wish they were here, Bathsheba. I should like you to see them. They tell me they are stout and seemly boys. I'm not much of a judge on such matters."

"Oh!"

He waited restlessly for her departure.

"Kit," she said at last in a wheedling voice, "if I may not see the twins, mayn't I walk through your house?"

He hesitated. "Yes—if you wish."

She passed rapidly through the kitchen and into the new part of Founder's. She stood in a large panelled room and gazed about her. "The parlour," she whispered. Salome and Christopher called this the hall. She picked up a silver candlestick. "The letter," she said to herself. It was under this candlestick Christopher had left his letter for Salome Blue. "A warming-pan." And she pointed. "Three chairs and two tables. One, two, three stools. A form. One, two, three, four flagons, and pewter enough—oh, say, fifty pounds! One cup of silver. Big and little fire-dogs. The woodenware and crocks and iron stuff, I suppose, are in the kitchen? A wool-wheel and a flax-wheel. Cards and such. Where's the loom?"

Christopher, marvelling, opened a door. It was here that he had hidden away the double cradle.

"Oh, a cradle!" The woman went to it and started it rocking with her foot. She entered the two bedchambers. One of these Christopher used for his study. With a mocking sigh she clasped her hands over Christopher's papers and notes. "And the whole Indian language! Yes, I'll enumerate that too. 'Tis part of the house." Her little eyes slid hither and yon, peeking and prying. She seemed completely to have for-

gotten the man who followed her in and out of the rooms, upstairs and down. Everything she counted off upon her fingers.

She went to a chest, opened it, and slapped it shut again. "I'll not stop now to count all those sheets. Seven pair is my guess." She pinched a mattress. "That's live-goose feathers, and I know, for Goody Goad gave it to me. And that blue quilt—it is mine really. Salome made it and gave it to *me*. 'Tis mine by rights, Kit. Ah, well. . . ." And she laughed quite naturally, seeming to come out of her maze. "Half the stuff in this house is mine by rights. But you are welcome to it. Indeed you are! I need but little these days." She had led the way back into the kitchen and now stood once more upon the threshold.

"Well, sir, I'll be gone." But she made no move to go. In agony Christopher waited her going. She said in a low voice, "Fenton is married now?"

"Yes."

"And you are married and Salome is married and Jazan is to be, soon. Oh, why," she burst out, "should I be the only one . . . ?"

"Hush. You are young yet. And now that you are a widow . . ."

"Am I young?" She pulled back her mop of orange curls and made him stare at her face and the purple *A* upon her forehead.

Christopher's *A* had almost faded away. Without the frame of hair she did not look young at all. Christopher was shocked and uncomfortable.

"Kit," she said, "I am exactly ten years older than you. I am thirty-five years old." She let the hair fall once more about her face. "If you had not married *her*, would you have married me—now that I am indeed a widow?"

He took a long time in answering her. The lines in his cheeks deepened. "Yes—I would."

"Branded and old, outcast and sinful—even such a one you would have married?"

"Yes, I would."

"Oh, Christopher, you are a wonderful man. Does Salome realize how wonderful? Loyal and faithful and good. Oh, Christopher, I could kneel to a man like you."

If he had not caught her arm she would have knelt.

"Let me go," she cried shrilly, as though there had been something improper in his restraining hand upon her arm. "Sir, let me go!" And she bounded away and was scurrying over the foot-bridge to Paradise.

So the time he had dreaded and dreamed of had come. They had not spoken alone since they had been taken together at Providence.

Often he had planned to himself what he would say when this time came. But there had been nothing to say. As he turned back into his solitary dwelling every corner seemed filled with Salome's presence: her knitting upon the settle, the knife she fancied most for paring, her old blue cloak hanging upon a peg. And he wished she were back once more.

14

THAT winter Christopher went from Indian encampment to encampment, working upon the Algonquin tongue. During his absence Bathsheba often trudged over to Founder's and bore his wife unwanted company. Salome silently watched her as she paced the house, counting its gear upon her fingers, nodding to herself and smiling. She would hang over the twins' cradle for hours and Salome knew by her murmured words

that Bathsheba pretended that these were her sons—hers and Fenton's—that Founder's was her house and Salome her servant.

It was after Fenton's infrequent visits to Paradise that Bathsheba seemed the most fitful. Sometimes she would shut herself into the boys' room and all day sit there humming and talking to herself. Sometimes the very sight of Fenton riding into the yard would send her off by herself for twenty-four hours. It was winter-time. What she did, where she slept, what she ate, no one knew, but many wondered.

One cold winter night Jazan woke hearing a cry of "Fire, fire!" The farm servants were running down from the loft, and she heard Gervase commanding one of them to get to the meeting-house and sound the alarm drum. She could see from the window in the hall that Founder's was afire. The smell of the smoke, the crackling of the fire, and the flaunting banners of flame promised little could be done to save the house.

Soon all Canaan—men, women, and children—were forming a bucket line from the doomed house to a hole chopped through the ice of the river. Ladders were set and shingles torn away. Jazan stayed in the kitchen at Paradise, keeping hot food and drink ready for all. Women had come to the fire with babies in their arms, and now sat about discussing in shrill voices how it might have started and how far it was like to go. There had been a pile of swingling tow in a shed, they said. It was there the fire had started. All the addition was burned away. The old house, which was of wattle and daub, cat and clay, would doubtless be saved.

The family had barely escaped with their lives. Salome's cherished household gear was burned. The sheets and blankets she had woven, thinking it was Fenton whom she would marry, were not saved. The pewter she had hoarded her pennies to buy

melted. Her spinning-wheel, loom, her wooden trenchers, churns, tubs—everything that was dearest to her—all was destroyed. And Christopher's Vocabulary of the Algonquin Language—all that was left of that was whatever might be in his mind. Salome sat in the kitchen of Paradise, looking through soot at the people gathered about her. In vain did Mr. Fearing tell her that she was lucky to have preserved her life and to have her sons and her husband safe. She was broken-hearted, and tears washed clean rivulets upon her face. Jake and Varney seemed frightened into unusual goodness by the night's adventure. They let Goody Goad put them to bed in a pallet in the kitchen.

More and more of the neighbours came crowding in. Yes, the men said, the old part of Founder's had been saved.

No one had seen Bathsheba nor mentioned her name, but Jazan felt a sick curiosity about her, and she took a candle and went up the stairs. She knocked on the door.

"Bathsheba?"

There was no answer, but she heard bed cords creak within. She entered. The light of her candle showed the woman, fully dressed, sitting on the edge of her bed. She peered at her erstwhile sister—now her mistress. She was hunched up into but small space, and her expression was both sly and diffident. The bottom of her skirt was dark, as though with water, and her shoes were wet as well.

This Jazan noticed. "You have already been to the fire?"

"No, I have been here all the time." She corrected herself. "I did cross over and looked out the serving wenches' rooms to see."

Jazan wanted to say, but your skirt and shoes are wet. She paused and said, "You are all dressed to go?"

"No. I often cannot sleep at night. Then I go downstairs and I do walk about."

"But you should not walk about at night."

The woman gave her a pretty look. "I walk about."

Jazan set a trap for her. "Have you stayed inside of Paradise all tonight?"

"As God lives, I have not been off this upper floor since evening prayers."

But your shoes and your skirts are wet. . . . She thought the words but did not say them.

A silence brooded between them, which Bathsheba was the first to break. She said with passion, "If their house burns it will serve them right. It is *my* house—mine! They have no right to live there."

"Salome has always been kind to you, and Christopher suffered grievously for that he tried to help you. You could not wish their house to burn over their heads? This night they have lost everything dear to them—except life itself. All Salome's household stuff . . ."

Bathsheba fumbled with her hands. She said in a small voice, "I am sorry," then tossed her head petulantly; and something of her old wilful beauty looked out from her little eyes. "They should not live there. Salome is not my friend. I think she has always hated me. Ever since first she saw me with that precious Fenton Parre! And those babies . . . it would have served them right if they had burned up—along with the live-goose mattress and the blue quilt! And . . ." She put up her fingers to begin enumerating upon them all the household things at Founder's. Jazan interrupted her.

"Hush yourself, Bathsheba. Let Salome count her loss. 'Tis no affair of yours."

"They should have been my children. Oh, Jazan!" And she began to weep.

"That's no reason for burning up other people's children." She was sure this woman had fired the swingling tow in the shed.

"Don't look so at me. I can't bear it, Jazan. Why doesn't anyone like me any more? You don't. And Fenton . . . Not even Kit. No one does except Mr. Fearing. Oh, he is an angel! He is the only person who has been kind to me since your father died: I'd do anything for him—but nothing for you."

Jazan thought a little bitterly how many times she had lessened this woman's labours, had tried to make life endurable for her. Love her she could not.

"Bathsheba," she said, speaking a little coldly as a mistress might to a serving-woman, "I wish you would heed Goody's advice. Conduct yourself in seemly wise, and somewhere we will find a husband for you."

"A husband for me? Never! I've had three of the worthless things already. That is, if you count Kit one."

"I hardly should. But you must listen to reason. I am sorry that . . ."

"Oh, spare your pity, Jazan Parre! And Fenton, save your money! I want no husband. I prefer to walk as I please. And I don't always walk, either." Her face, which had begun to look wild and haggard, softened with laughter. Her voice dropped, and she went on in her ordinary tones: "A week ago I was in Marlborough—and that's God's truth! And there before the grist-mill I did see Mercuricus English. Now I will tell you one thing. He may have courted you for three years, in honour and under your father's roof, but *me* has he been after, in dishonour, for a year and more. Oh, I'd none of him! I tell you men are not worth the havoc they brew. But seeing me thus,

alone, he made up to me. Asked how I had gotten so far from Canaan. So I told him that I had come in my wolf shape. . . . 'Tis fast and light a woman runs on wolf's feet! You should have seen his face. He'll pester me no more—for he believed what I said."

"Bathsheba, you must not even play with such dangerous words. Many besides Mercuricus will believe your—fables."

"Well," she said logically, "I have to do something, don't I? Besides mind pots and gather herbs, scour and spin for Goody Goad? And don't you worry about my wits, nor think I would ever set a fire—for I know what was in your mind, Jazan Parre. You saw my petticoats had been dragged through snow. The truth is I did but go to the privy a moment or two before you came to me. 'Tis no matter for a servant to mention to her mistress, so I did not tell. A poor serving-woman may go to the privy—may she not?—without telling her mistress."

At last Jazan left her. At first she had no doubt but Bathsheba had fired Founder's, but at the end she felt such suspicion was nonsense.

15

SALOME sat on the pallet in the kitchen, nursing the two boys who had now awakened. She did not look to have milk enough to satisfy a mouse. She told everyone that she nursed these two over-long to escape another pregnancy. Christopher had been angry with her (she did not know why) that she had had two children so soon after marriage—although it really was not very soon. The plump, ruddy creatures fastened to her thin breasts like leeches. There was nothing pretty about Salome's maternity, but her face had an uplifted look. Finally she spoke to her sister-in-law.

"Jazan, for some time Christopher and I have talked of

offering ourselves as missionaries to the Indians. John Eliot has told Kit that it is a wicked thing to amass knowledge year after year and not use it. Now all his notes are burned. I think before this he would have gone, followed the command of our Lord, 'Go ye out . . .' and so forth. But I would not. I loved my security, my home, my babies, too. Tonight the Lord has shown me his way. He has taken away my house. . . ." She stopped, swallowed back her tears, and continued bravely, "You remember, Jazan, how I was laughed at, some years ago . . . for my great spinning? I was always preparing for a wedding that God didn't seem to sanction—for it never came. All those sheets and blankets, towels and covers—everything was burned tonight."

Varney, being satisfied, was laid back on the pallet, but Jake sucked on. "I believe it is the Lord speaking to me—and Mr. Fearing thinks so as well. I believe the time will come when I can say, 'Oh, blessed fire that burned away my avarice, my sinful love of ease.'"

Surely Salome's life had never been one of ease.

"How can you leave your sons?"

"The Lord will provide. That is, I know Mother will take care of them if Kit pays her well. And it will be better for them to have parents who labour patiently in the Lord's vineyard rather than amass great wealth . . . and many sheets. From now on, Christopher and I stand shoulder to shoulder in this matter. He has wanted to go to Mr. Eliot for long. I held him back with my selfish desires."

16

AT last Goody Goad had the satisfaction of turning Bathsheba out of the boys' room, which was now needed for the Chris-

topher Parres. Like it or not, she was to sleep with Jessie and Phoebe. Bathsheba raised her eyebrows, did not complain; and behind the Goodwife's back she sought out Christopher. Humbly, she said she had one request only. Would her master permit her to remove herself across the river? The old part of Founder's still stood. It wrung the man's heart to see anyone who had been so proud now so reduced. She was coarsely dressed in a hempen apron, with a drab forehead cloth tied tightly over her orange hair. Founder's—what remained of it—was his. Quickly he granted the unfortunate woman's request; but she must look sharp, he said, that every morning she got over to work by sunrise. Ay, she'd look sharp, she said, and laughed a stinging laugh.

"And one thing more, Master, a few odd ends to furnish my home for me? Mayn't I have this-and-that?"

"What is it you wish—under the name of 'this-and-that'?"

"Why, just a little of the household gear in the boys' room that I have come to love during these last six months." This, too, he granted.

Then he and Salome rode away to John Eliot in Natick. He did not see Bathsheba's removal—which was odd enough.

Goody Goad had resented her master's promise to "the most worthless female I ever did see" of not only separate dwelling but the furniture out of the boys' room. She supposed it was the chests, the bedstead, goose-feather-bed, stools, and standing table the woman wanted. All those useful things she left behind.

For the day of her removal Bathsheba put on her sumptuous rust-coloured silk and over it a green cloth cloak lined with beaver and furnished with a beaver hood, and she carried a small beaver muff. On her feet were purple shoes, which she protected from the slush of the melting February day by clogs. These clogs gave her a mincing, highy-tighty gait and added

some four inches to her already sufficient height. Her eyebrows, which, untended, were mere dabs of orange fuzz, she had narrowed and darkened for the first time in many months. And she smiled and hummed to herself, looked about her slyly, and spoke to no one. But everyone watched her as she laboriously crossed back and forth over the foot-bridge, lovingly toting the moth-eaten beaver skin with the white mark, snarls of fishing tackle, old books, boots, bits, dog collars, the wolf-skin from the floor, and the odds and ends of male attire from the hooks behind the door.

Jazan and Forethought Fearing stood side by side in the hall, peering out a casement window at her. Phoebe, brushing the hearth with a turkey wing, shook her head. She said Bathsheba wished the possessions of the two young men—each of whom had loved her—so she might work some witchcraft upon them.

"Oh, nonsense, you foolish wench," Forethought reproved her. Although superstitious enough when it came to the page to which his Bible opened, he did not hold with the country mind which sees a witch in every lonely female. "She has sinned," he said, "and indeed she has confessed her sin and repented." This was too true for the comfort of many.

Ever since Bathsheba had become a servant in the house where formerly she had been mistress, her mind seemed strongly drawn towards religion. Jazan knew what an embarrassment she was to Forethought, and she admired his patience with her. Over and over (when he had come to be with Jazan) he had been forced to sit assuring the servant that her soul was not lost. At his suggestion, she confessed her sins before the entire congregation. But one confession did not satisfy her, and if ever there was an opportunity, she was standing up in meeting and confessing again. She had been the most miserable of

sinner. She had sinned with Major Parre and with Mr. Parre. The brand upon her forehead was nothing compared to the brand upon her heart. Sometimes a young maid would giggle during these confessions; and Christopher, sitting among the men, would redden; and Salome, upon the women's side, would turn white.

So Jazan and Forethought stood together by a casement window in the hall, and the man tried to explain again the faith he had in Bathsheba's struggle for redemption. But even he was a little nonplussed when they heard a bumping down the stairway and in a few minutes Bathsheba, in clogs and muff, was seen dragging an enormous bear trap over the bridge to Founder's.

Soon the village folk would sneak to Bathsheba's hut (that was all it now was) for charms and magic potions. Canaan had had no witch before and many had felt the need. Goody Goad purged for every ailment. Surely the heart and body often sickened beyond the power of purging.

A child reported that once passing the hut he had heard a man and woman laughing and talking together. On peeking through the window he had seen "Dame Sheba" alone. She sat before a great pot bubbling upon her hearth fire and addressed herself to this pot. The lid rose up. Steam and a man's voice came from within.

Mercuricus English swore that in Marlborough she had changed from a woman to a she-wolf shape. No—he had not seen the change but he knew it had happened.

She cured Phoebe Bemis of a wart with a toad's skin.

Once in passing Baileys' Acres she had stopped to gossip with Judith Bailey, a heavy-minded woman kept unwed through the avarice of her father. Judith had laboured for an

hour at her churn but the butter refused to come. Her guest told her that the hair of a black cat would bring the butter, and so it was.

17

ON a sweet, sodden day of earliest spring, very late in the afternoon, Jazan stood by the river watching far overhead the arrow flight of wild geese. She heard their phantom crying.

Totonic had told her how the gods of the spring, far to the south, released the wild geese from their bows. The geese came only by the hundred, the wild ducks by the thousand, but last of all the pigeons came by the millions. Mile upon mile of pigeons, breaking branches from the trees they roosted on, darkening the sky. For a short time there would be pigeons for breakfast, dinner, and supper, until everyone hated the sight of a pigeon. So the gods of spring, she thought, standing in a flowery southern world shot the wild birds north like arrows.

The river was swollen with melting snow and the sky above with rain. One drop fell upon her uplifted face. It was here Forethought Fearing, now for two months her espoused husband, came to her. Not even Jazan had been so fond as to tramp the delicately nurtured man through the winter ice and cold, so the past few months had been spent within doors and in decorum. She was ashamed to remember the harvest months of wanton dalliance. It had not made a bond between them, as it might have with some men, but a barrier. In the fall her conduct had seemed a little wicked to her. Now it seemed worse than wicked. It had been foolish and unkind. In the fall she had not cared. All she wished was to free herself of the memory of another man. But the winter evenings they had passed together (and never once alone) had changed her feel-

ings for him. She pitied Forethought Fearing—his loneliness, his doubts, his weakness, his delicacy of mind and body. She regretted that she had offended that delicacy, and she was cautious now how she comported herself with him and a little afraid before him. He was so unlike any other man. Her love was compounded of pity, fear, and wonder of his strangeness; but it was love.

She saw he had already been to Paradise and taken from its hook the old clothes of Fenton. Reddish leathern breeches and leggings, a blue fustian shirt. She had never seen his face so beautiful, as though washed in some springs fresher even than the clean waters of Canaan. He looked young, not merely in years as other men may look, but in centuries, as though he came from far away and long ago, from the hey-day of the world. She thought of the Greeks whom her father had loved.

"Oh, Forethought," she cried, for she saw in his eyes that something had happened. Then he told her that a change had come upon Mr. Redbank. Utterly had he forgotten the peevish months when he had only wept at the thought of his assistant's marrying.

"It was he who sent me to you. He says he cannot die happy unless he knows I am set up here at Paradise with you for wife. He cannot understand why I have been so tardy. Never had I the heart to tell him 'twas he who held me back."

Now might they marry when they chose, and the months of waiting were over. Forethought made no movement towards the lady who might so soon be his bride. He started a lengthy dissertation on how the Puritans, in taking away all religious significance to marriage (wishing to break utterly with popish artifice), had degraded it. "For among us marriage is little more than a business partnership. No wonder there has been much divorce in the Bay Colony; and the Anglican and the

Roman Church both fling that against us. For a man and woman do not pledge themselves before God but before a Justice of the Peace only."

Jazan knew that it had always irked him that clergymen were not allowed to perform the marriage ceremony.

"My father was bred to the Anglican Church and he has said—for mine own ear only—that never might he attend one of our chilly merchantman weddings but he was homesick for the old ritual. He believed, and I as well, that marriage is a state of sanctity. For it is between a man, a woman, and God, not a man, a woman, and the state."

Jazan had never heard marriage referred to as "sanctified" or "holy." You might as well talk about a holy mortgage!

The night and the rain were coming down upon them. "Oh, this rain," he cried in exasperation, "I have much more to say, and yet we must seek a roof; and I'm in no mood for Paradise and all that bustling household and all those open ears!"

Close beside them was Fenton's fur house and the door was carelessly ajar.

"Surely it is a shower only. Let's slip in here a moment and then it will be over." They went inside. It was dark within the windowless shack. The neat piles of beaver skins made luxurious seats for them, and gave off a sweet, wild fragrance of fur and bark, for the Indians did not cure hides with urine and brains, as did the white men, but herbs and bark. They sat side by side, and the rain rattled on the roof close above their heads.

"Jazan," he said, pressing the hand he held, "do you know the old Prayer Book lines? Of course, 'tis a heretic literature, but it contains much beauty and truth."

"Say them out to me."

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of

God . . ." and with no faltering or change of that impassioned voice he went through to the end. When it was the woman's turn to speak he bade her repeat after him. He took upon himself the words of clergyman and groom.

Not until the last line was said, "that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting, Amen," did he turn his shadowy face to her.

"Thus," he said, "have we promised between ourselves. Let Colonel Coffin hear our vows to the civil state. You and I, Jazan, have repeated those awful words before God, and they shall be more binding upon us than anything a garrulous Justice of the Peace may think up for us to say."

He kissed her on the cheek.

"Sir, you mean we are married now?"

"Ay, before God," he said, "our souls are indeed wed, but our bodies must wait upon Colonel Coffin."

His last words reassured her a little, but she wished to be out from under this heavy roof. She remembered once seeing Johnny Pigge and Fenton meet before the fur house and enter. Wordless they both had been but their eyes knowing. And she herself a maid with hair still loose upon her shoulders had known and been ashamed. She thought how little this man beside her would understand (or wish to understand) the little, knowing girl of long ago. She was not her own self to him but the fulfilment of some dream. Her self he might not even like—provided he ever knew it. She turned and clung to him in passion and a fear of losing this man so lightly poised and changeable.

"Forethought, you will never leave me?" She meant never go back to the stern monastic faith that once had enveloped him—in which she could have no part.

"Never, never," he promised. His cheek pressed to hers, his

hands lightly fondling her body. She felt his breath steady upon her. He was calm and sure of himself, and she was sure of him. He caressed her gently, and she was moved as she never had been by those frenzied moments in the woods when tears would fill his eyes and his hands would shake and she knew he half despised her and she half despised him for his weakness.

"Oh, no . . . not yet . . ." she protested, for she could not doubt what rashness he intended. "You yourself said Colonel Coffin . . ." And "You have broke a laurel busk in my bodice," she said, trying to speak naturally. "Forethought, it is sticking into me."

In the dark his fingers found the lacing and untied the knot. "I've heard tell," he whispered with laughter in his voice, "that loving one of our well-stayed modern ladies is like loving a laurel tree. So let the laurel turn back to a Daphne, sweetheart . . . sweet nymph."

And again she thought of the golden Greeks.

In the fall all the strength had been in her. Now their rôles were reversed, and she delighted that it was so. She had learned in the winter that he would brook little contradiction, and as she had come to love him she had come to fear his disapproval.

Then to her breast he whispered so impious a thing that even she was shocked.

"Into thy hands . . . Jazan Parre," and his voice broke.



MARCH 26, 1670. The date was cut upon slate stone and set up in the burial-ground. It was Mr. Redbank's death-day. As long as Jazan Parre lived the sight of this stone (and its date) would mean but one thing to her—the smell of Fenton's furs, darkness and rain upon a low roof, Forethought Fearing's love. Yet for her too this was a death-day.

The following Sabbath was the first time Forethought Fearing preached to Canaan. Mostly he read from the written word before him. His text was "For the woman tempted me and I did eat." It came like a thunder-clap after the loving, tedious words of the dead man. He blasted lewdness and dissolute living, spoke against gaudy and immodest attire. Hell itself crackled about the roof busses and the main trusses and the tie-beam and the king-post of the old meeting-house.

Bathsheba sat with her face in her hands. Once she moaned.

Rue Redbank (now Rue Bailey) clenched her hands in anger. It was a cruel discourtesy to her dead grandfather. He had been planted less than a week. Now all his life had stood for was set at naught.

Colonel Coffin nodded in approval. How good did taste this solid meat after the pap Mr. Redbank had been spooning out to them!

Preserved English, the smith, was whispering to his Mercuricus. It was never for such beliefs he had carried his pike at Marston Moors.

Hagar's eyes flashed with joy. So now she understood Mr. Fearing's shilly-shallyings. As long as Mr. Redbank lived he had been too courteous to take a firm stand against his doc-

trines. Now he was free! Now, now he spoke as behoved his Fearing blood!

Jazan Parre had a taffeta hood about her head half covering a face which had been white to start with and now grew whiter yet. The wide round eyes stared soberly at the figure in the pulpit. Cloak and hood were of the blackish purple of a flea's back and dotted over with tiny embroidered flowers. Her dress was of scarlet grain. Its elegance suited her position but not the clergyman's words. Were these the words of the man she was about to marry?

Forethought had not come to Paradise during the last five busy days. There had been Mr. Redbank's death and burial. This, his first sermon to write out . . . but had he himself written it? She had a flash of knowledge. It was a sermon of his father's (barrels of Fearing sermons—enough to last a lifetime). Yet some he had added for himself. Never had old Peter objected to fine clothing for fine people. This command for sober raiment she traced not to his father but to Hagar. Often had she heard the two argue this matter together. Hagar had won, had she? Hagar and the stout old ghost of Peter Fearing.

Now she saw there was another reason why he had not wished to see her: that old cry, "The woman tempted me and I did eat. . . ."

The next day Forethought Fearing borrowed a horse from Paradise; but as he did not enter the house, he saw no one but Gervase Blue. He said he was riding to Boston to make the final arrangements with Fenton Parre in regard to his marriage with Jazan.

"And while there," Hagar had added to Gervase's story, "he will pack the six thousand volumes of the great Fearing library. Now that we have a passable cart path all the way out

from Boston, the books can come by waggon." Fenton had used his influence about Boston to have the pack-horse trail enlarged for wheels. And Hagar knew (but Jazan did not) that Mr. Fearing was going to take the West Chamber for his study. "T'other day he told me so," she said.

"When was 't'other day'?" Jazan asked.

"The day after Mr. Redbank's burial. I met him as he came out of the meeting-house. And he said now there was no choice for it. The marriage should be gone through with."

But to his espoused wife he had said nothing of this matter. Hagar enlarged upon the joy it would be to have both Mr. Fearing and the Fearing library dwelling here at Paradise. Her sister wondered if now she would ever wish to marry Abraham Blue and set up in a house of her own.

Jazan, in spite of Forethought's ominous silence, could not take the matter very seriously. She knew great laxity was permitted to betrothed pairs. Never once had her father reported to a higher court any young couple whose first child was born early. Familiarity after betrothal and before marriage was a common sin among the Puritans. A legally betrothed woman was neither maid nor wife. If she were unfaithful to her chosen man, she was punished as for adultery. Forethought could not be taking the matter so much to heart. She thought of the hours in the fur house. How loving and sure of himself he had been! And how sure of him had she been! What was the beautiful old Bible phrase? And such a man "knew" the woman. It had been true knowledge that they both had had. But now—this silence!

At the end of another week, muddy ox carts creaked through the gates of Paradise. There, under tarpaulins, was the Fearing library. It had come but Forethought had not. The books were unpacked and piled high in the West Chamber, even as Hagar

ordered. But Jazan sickened a little. She whistled to the dogs and walked for an hour and more over the deserted Sheep Walks towards Sudbury.

At last, when he did come, he brought Tom Pigge and young Seth Bailey with him. Both these men were carpenters and joiners. He greeted his espoused wife with courtesy and began to explain—but to no one person in particular—that, with Major Parre's consent, bookshelves should be built from floor to ceiling of the West Chamber. He had been to the saw-pit and ordered seasoned wood. It would come today. In the meantime, let the carpenters begin with the old table-board. So, without discussion, the matter was settled. Mr. Fearing would not sit to meat with servants.

Goody Goad retired to the privacy of the privy to weep. Tom Pigge measured, squared, and planed. Then he spat upon his hands and soon his saw buzzed through the soft pine-wood. The table-board was ended, and all it stood for. Seth, the Younger, sighed once and shook his head. Soon he would be back at Baileys' Acres, telling his bride: "We have sawn up the table-board at Paradise for to make shelves for the Fearing library. . . ."

From floor to ceiling would stretch the books, soothing to the eye with their brown leather and gold bindings.

Although Forethought was busy with his plans, he showed none of the enthusiasm a man commonly shows for a new dwelling. It seemed to Jazan he was going through the matter—even to the arranging of his books—as though it were an ill matter but not to be avoided. Any time now, the couple might go on to the nuptials. Jazan felt she could not, unless she had private word with him. A private word had always been difficult to arrange for at Paradise, but at last she saw her chance and took it.

It came upon a rainy day, and Mr. Redbank had been dead for two weeks. The house, lighted only by tiny diamond panes, was dark, damp, and broody. Against the panes the rain washed. It blew down the chimney, and the smell of soot and smoke was everywhere. It drummed upon the peaks and gables of the ageing house.

Fearing was alone in that room he had chosen for himself, and he was fortifying it with books against the rest of Paradise, as a blockhouse is fortified against the Indians by a lining of brick, fortifying himself against Paradise, the world, and perhaps against herself.

She came to him, and he sat upon a tiny step-ladder, his head against the summer beam.

"Forethought, I want to talk with you. Now—if you are in the mood."

"Of course. Any time you wish." He answered in a voice both light and strained. He came down from off his ladder.

"Would it not suit you," he asked, brushing the dust from his fingers and indicating the great canopied bed, "if we set up this formidable galleon in our own bedchamber? For I intend that we sleep in the bedroom you once shared with your sisters. Close by the chimney and off the kitchen, 'tis the warmest room in the house."

"Will it go in?"

"Just and barely. I have measured. Of course, Hagar has slept there of late, but she is most agreeable to moving herself upstairs."

"If you wish, we might cut a door through the partition. Then you would not have to go from bedroom to kitchen and kitchen to hall and hall to entry to reach your study." It was not of such matters she wished to speak.

"No, no—never." He spoke sharply. "I wish to keep these

two ideas utterly apart. I will spend many a night here, as you know—as I always have—meditating by myself, alone.” He picked up an armful of pamphlets and made as though to ascend the ladder again. She must not let him escape her.

“Forethought, why did you preach that sermon? Am I right in one thing? You did not write it yourself. You read one of your father’s?”

She regretted the words as she said them. His sensitive face receded from her, and he looked at her from out a mask.

“You are right.”

“And why did you so, Forethought?”

The mask muttered, “You should know.”

She knew. “Forethought, I am sorry that things went as they did betwixt us.”

“I am twice as sorry—nay, a hundred times more sorry than you.”

“If you do wish, this marriage need go no further. You must know Fenton has not set his heart upon it. He will never sue you for breach of contract.” His fingers tapped the bindings of the books. For the first time, she did not like these fine-gentleman fingers—too delicate they looked.

“Forethought,” she pleaded, “do not take this sin to heart! ’Tis but a little sin.”

“Exactly what I expected you to say. And now you’d have me refuse marriage—and thus add ‘little sin’ upon ‘little sin’? And Fenton would doubtless be agreeable, as you say. You Parres are not too finicky with your ‘little sins.’ Neither Fenton, Christopher, nor you.” She did not speak. “True, what may happen betwixt an espoused pair is small compared to fornication betwixt single man and maid.” She flushed and her eyes faltered at the grim way he rolled out the ugly Latin word.

"Would you rather put off the marrying—a little?"

"I shall insist upon that until you can swear to me that no child of mine was begotten in our sin. For, as you know, a child conceived out of wedlock is damned utterly—unless the parents make full church confession."

Only a few months before he had told her that he did not hold with infant damnation. This, he had said, was contrary to the spirit of Christ. She did not resent his words as much as she pitied his despair and confusion.

"I can tell you now in a week's time," she said. It gave her a sense of intimacy with him, for she never before had spoken of such matters to any man and she felt her words indeed bound them together. Now did he not only know the nakedness of her body, but how in its rhythms it followed the waxing and waning of the moon. He did not seem to hear her words—which meant much to her. He was fingering a powdering old folio of theology. He did not feel the importance of this new intimacy. She turned to leave him, and he called to her. Softly, he called her name. It did not sound on his lips as it did on the lips of anyone else. Soft, low, and sweet, it sounded.

"Jazan," and she saw that the mask had dropped a little from his face, "why did you tempt me so?"

She did not argue with him, although to a logical mind it might seem that he was as much at fault as she. They spoke softly. Generously, Jazan admitted the guilt of that night was hers. Thus they were set in a pattern from which there was no escape. From that time forth, whatever went wrong was the woman's fault. Forethought would always be right. For at that moment—when he said her name and the mask she feared slipped from his face—she had no wish for herself; only to lift a little from his soul the burden of his guilt. Let it rest upon her. Was she not, as he said, after all, only a Parre? Parres

can carry guilt. And falter not under the load. She was proud of her family name.

And he told her that once his father had said that never until he had sinned would he fully understand man's humble need of God. He had been too proud, he said, and God had punished him.

She saw his face was waxen and his lips dry. She pitied his despair and yet had no sympathy with it. She noted that their sin was first her fault and next the punishment of God. Never was it *his* fault! She grew cold and frightened as women always must when first they realize that it is not a strong man they are marrying but a weak child. A smile trembled on his crooked lips. "Jazan, do not desert me. Sometimes you seem all that I have left upon this earth and all in Heaven." She laid a gentle arm about his bowed shoulders. She feared he might weep. He raised his head.

"It was never inertia," he said, "that made me read out my father's sermon on lewd women and coarse life. 'Twas a symbol that from now on I am his son. Oh, I have gone this way and gone that! Those days are over. I have sinned and now I know!"

Yet she guessed that Forethought would push matters farther than ever his father would have done. This talk of "unworldliness"—surely Forethought never got that from his father.

Two weeks later, they stood before Colonel Coffin and were married.

2

FORETHOUGHT FEARING went to work reforming Canaan. The time was ripe for him. For two years Mr. Redbank had preached most childishly upon God's love. "Little children, love one another" had been his text for some thirty

or forty sermons. This was a good thought—but it had grown thin with repetition. The congregation had tended to sleep. Now they woke up. And the tithingmen might put away the cunning staffs they had for those who slept at Sabbath services. Everyone sat on the edge of the pew to hear Mr. Fearing.

He went at his flock (which had for years been considered lax) with delicacy and perception. He did not threaten them, except only in that first sermon, but persuaded. It was not alone through the pulpit that he worked. Almost without their knowing it, discipline was tightened through Canaan and tightened again. He divided the township into small groups for weekday readings and prayers. By the end of summer seven such groups had been formed. Forethought would go from group to group, but he was too tactful to sit out an evening with any of them. They loved his simple going-about amongst them. His mind gained an ascendancy over theirs.

In the old days the tithingmen had been unpaid and their offices light. On Sabbaths they kept order at meeting and turned (and turned again) the great hour-glass before the pulpit as the minister preached. To each tithingman was assigned so and so many families; and these he was to watch and report upon. Sabbath infringements, rude talk between married folk or lewd talk among the single, neglect of children or cruelty to domestic animals or servants, drunkenness, swearing—for all these things the tithingman was supposed to watch sharply. Very nominal had their work been in the days of Mr. Parre and Mr. Redbank, for neither of these gentlemen cared for a spy system. "Look into your own field and cultivate that," Jude Parre used to say, "do not always be leaning over the fence seeing weeds in your neighbour's crops."

Now Colonel Coffin and Mr. Fearing got together and made a powerful weapon out of the old system. It was the minister

who was of so pretty a mind as to suggest that the tithingmen be paid for every error they reported. The number of offences increased tremendously, and Forethought was always reaching into his wallet to pull out another coin. Much misconduct that had been going on for many a year was now reported.

It was aired abroad that Goody Orde, the taverner's wife and town bakeress, commonly set her Monday's batch of bread to rise upon the Sabbath, that Bathsheba (officially the "Widow Bliss") dressed in silks and laces unfitting to her station of penniless workwoman, that Mercuricus English was addicted to gallantry and profitless fowling, that the Baileys paid their farm servants less than the wages determined by law, that Gervase Blue during spring lambing absented himself from meeting only to play midwife to ewes.

So, as soon as the tithingmen began to get money for their sharp eyes, they saw much.

Colonel Coffin was for haling all these folk to court, but Fearing was wiser. He sought these people out singly and talked with them—usually with great success. Bathsheba wept and wept, and forswore (for the moment) fine raiment. But he struck a rock when he came against Gervase Blue, really his own servant. For the first time in her life Jazan heard her husband's voice strident with anger. These two men hated each other unreasonably and always.

Hagar loved this new way of life. Humbly she vowed that, although by law gentlewomen were permitted silks, laces, buckles, locketts of gold, decked hair, and great sleeves, she would eschew them. Forethought approved her choice. But Jazan went her own way and wore with careless ease the fine, gallant fashions of the period, with their low bodices, cut, curled, and flowing hair, knotted sleeves, and embroidered gloves.

Hagar took upon herself the title of "tithingmaid," a thing never heard of before. She got no pay for her pains, but she did ferret out and report upon many a small matter. Once she had the audacity to tell Mr. Fearing that his wife set no good example. The nakedness of her bosom and arms was not to the best interests of Canaan. But Fearing perversely did not wish his wife to change the manner of her dress. He was gently born and liked it that his wife went bravely dressed in good fashion. He was irritated by Hagar's criticism.

"Well, Sister," he said, "I admire that it pleases you to adopt a sober raiment, but I do not criticize Jazan that she forgets not the wealth and position of the Parres and the Fearings. It does no harm."

Hagar felt herself criticized—a thing she never could abide. She tossed her head. "No harm? Then you have not seen what I have seen."

"And what was that, Sister?"

"Why, yesterday, the men were so busy over the Indian corn they carried their dinner to the fields with them. And Jazan went to them at nooning with cold cider from the cellar, dressed in that cramoisy gown of hers—half on the shoulder is it and half off—and sat herself on the ground with the young men. I saw Shad Penny and his brother stare at her."

He was fretted but unmoved. She went on, and now her words made him smart.

"And Gervase Blue . . . he stood above her and looked down upon her as she sat—the way men *do* look down when they wish to see—much. . . ."

That night Forethought sternly told his wife two things. She was to get herself a modesty cloth or a kerchief (whatever she called such things) somewhat thicker than a cobweb; "and likewise you are never to go to the fields no more with the

workfolk—neither to carry food nor drink, nor for any other reason. And last June, Jazan, one day I saw you weeding flax barefooted and with kilted petticoats. It fits not to your station in life. You are no country wench.”

“But I *am* a country wench. Can you not see that?”

He smiled a patronizing smile. “I have seen it—in the past. I hope to see it no more.”

It was but a little thing and yet it cut deeply. All her life she had been much out of doors. But she was anxious, and over-anxious, to please him. “Very well. It is as you say.” She knew that among the white men (but not among the red) a wife is but a servant to her husband, without property and without will of her own. Yet as he spoke, and she agreed, it was as if all the doors and windows of Paradise had blown shut and she was trapped within.

Thus, during the first six months of his marrying, Forethought accomplished much among the Canaanites—but nothing at Swamp Town. He was determined that the Indians embrace Christianity and give over their heathen ways. At first he was patient with them, but in his heart he despised them, and they knew it. He spoke to them only through the interpretation of their sachem, Totonic. The two men would stand side by side upon the dancing ground before the long house. First Mr. Fearing spoke in English and then Totonic in Algonquin. To the clergyman’s chagrin, his serious words, rephrased by the little Indian, always aroused laughter. Never had he guessed in Boston that Tawnies were so prone to giggle. They giggled at the Holy Ghost and Christ upon the Cross. They giggled over the Ten Commandments. Also he tried to help them with their agriculture—as had Mr. Parre years before. Tried to teach them proper care of domestic animals. To this end he bought, from his own purse, a yoke of oxen and gave

it them. They ate the oxen, inviting friends and relatives from as far as Quinsigamond and Nashua to come join them at the feast.

They would not give up the wandering ways of their forbears. Half the time Swamp Town was almost deserted, although the General Court had passed a law that all Indians sit down soberly upon the one place only. Swamp Town was on the Catacoonamaug and that led to the Merrimac, and what the Merrimac might lead to only a few men such as Fenton Parre might guess. When they wished, the Indians got in their canoes and floated off down the river as stealthily as autumn leaves riding upon brook water.

In dealing with the white men he habitually consulted his sister-in-law, but for the red men he consulted his wife. At first he urged her as a Christian duty to go much to Swamp Town. But once he had seen her sitting on the mats of Moon Goes' hut, smoking a dirty pipe, talking to the woman with shrugs, gestures, and doggerel Indian-English. He liked her no better that she was comfortable to the heathen and they to her. He bade her go no more to Swamp Town.

Soon he had been told that one of Totonic's wives was not an Indian but Johnny Pigge. He was determined to get to the bottom of the matter. Seemingly there was no bottom to any matter connected with these slippery folk. First he questioned Tom Pigge, who now wore a scarlet *D* sewed to his jerkin. Tom told Forethought of his Johnny's death in too much and too contradictory detail. He decided to ask his own wife, for he believed she would know and tell the truth.

Jazan sat in the hall sewing. Billy Bright was on a joint-stool beside her. She had taken it upon herself to teach the child his letters, and every evening he came to her thus, as formerly Gervase had come. Billy was copying the alphabet

from a horn-book she had given him, and unobserved Mr. Fearing stood at the door and watched them. The boy said "A" and drew a large *A* upon his slate. "X" he said and drew it. And an *E*. Then he cleverly sketched an axe and took it to his mistress. She laughed at him lovingly and flattered him. "If only you could write as well as you do draw!" And she bade him draw a picture of an angel for her and mind he did not write "angle" as he had last night. Billy drew everywhere—with charcoal and chalk on the sides of barns, on the backs of gravestones. Jazan patted his flaxen hair, cut so squarely on forehead and downy nape. Jazan loved Billy Bright, as her soft hand and eyes showed. The child withdrew happily to his stool.

Forethought cleared his throat. He saw love go out of the woman's eyes. Fear came in. This he resented. He questioned her about Totonic's two wives. "Can it be that this Weetamoe is truly Johnny Pigge? If so, I shall take steps. Two wives are shameful enough, but if one is a white woman 'tis an abomination."

Jazan bent her deceptively innocent face to her hemming, but her heart faltered. If she was to lie to her husband she wished to do it calmly—not by accident. She bit off a thread and raised her eyes.

"No. Johnny has long been dead. Totonic found Weetamoe on the Passaconaway. 'Tis no concern of ours, sir."

Her husband believed her without another question. He returned to his study. But why was Billy Bright so silent? She glanced at him. He sat in misery, his fair head bowed in shame for her. She felt she had had no choice but to lie in this matter. She could not bring the white men's wrath down upon Swamp Town. It was a small moment, yet it is such—and not the large ones—that undermine a marriage. She realized that she was

more ashamed that a child servant had overheard her falsehood than that she had lied to her husband. And she knew that her old loyalty to Totonic was stronger in her than her new loyalty to her husband. This knowledge frightened her. A little coldly she bade Billy get to his bed.

Mr. Fearing selected a tithingman for Swamp Town. Samuel Bull. He was Nipmuc and had been to Mr. Eliot's Indian school at Natick, and actually could cut clapboards and shingles and read from the *Up-Biblum God*. Sam was a trifling knave, fawning upon the white men. When he came to Paradise he ate in the hall with the gentry, for he was a Christian and Mr. Fearing wished to show respect for his baptism.

Sam Bull came often. But after Jazan's marriage Totonic came but once. He ate in the kitchen with the servants. True, Jazan left her sister and husband and sat in the kitchen herself. At first Totonic was sullen and morose, and the servants embarrassed by their mistress's presence. The young woman did all she might to lighten the atmosphere, and a little like her father before her, she flung back her head and flung out her narrow hands and told stories and laughed and urged food and especially drink upon everyone. So it ended a merry occasion.

On parting she stood at the kitchen door beside Totonic, and he tried to shake hands with her. Not understanding the custom well, he held her hand for a long time as he made a flowery speech about her father, whom he had loved with all his heart. Mr. Fearing saw this hand-holding, which was surely innocent enough. That night, when they were alone for a moment before evening prayers, he berated her with a coarseness of word and mood that amazed her. Could such conduct as hers be called "wanton conduct"?

And he told her she must not spoil Billy Bright. He was nine years old now, and no baby. He was not to come to her any

more; neither with his books nor drawings nor his smashed fingers. Then she realized that she had loved Billy so much only half for his own sake and half for his position. He, too, was a fatherless lad. He, too, that saddest of things, a child servant. It was half for Gervase's sake she loved him. Eight years ago she had not been old enough to give Gervase the mothering a child needs. Now she was old enough, and she gave it to Billy Bright.

Then he threw up against her the name of Mercuricus English. It had been told to him, he said, that she had behaved herself badly with the tough young smith, dallying and tarrying with him, but without thought of honest marriage to follow. This was true. She was ashamed, as she stood now before her husband. But she thought of the kisses of a heedless man's mouth with less shame than the kisses in the eyes of Gervase Blue. Never did they get to his lips.

She went early—and melancholy—to the great bed which now filled the little chamber. And on the other side of the partition was Forethought's study, and she heard the scratching of his pen. Then she cried a little, not for any one thing but only because she was very tired. It seemed to her she was tired all the time now-a-days, although her work was light and she went no more abroad into the fields. She had tried hard to give Totonic a merry evening. That had tired her. . . . No, it was not that. She was tired because she was lonely. One door after another seemed to be slamming shut behind her. There had been no angry words between herself and her husband. She hardly knew how it happened, but he had shut one door after another and separated her from the world she knew. Nor had he opened any new door to her. He had shut her away from himself as skilfully as he had shut her away from the outside world.

Now she heard Hagar's whisper from beyond the partition, and the scratching pen had ceased. Hagar often came to him thus in his study. But Jazan never presumed to interrupt him. She knew well from whom it was Forethought had heard the name of Mercuricus English.

In her loneliness, she prayed to God to send her a child. She knew that Forethought much wished a son "to play Forethought to his Peter," and also that he would not believe their sin of March 26, 1670 (cut upon the gravestone of Mr. Redbank), was forgiven them without this sign. She prayed to God for a child to share her loneliness with her. And she thought of Mary—gentle Mary, Mother of the world. There are many things, she saw, that 'tis easy for a woman to explain to another woman. She understood the Roman love for Mary. Hard to explain how the heart aches for a child to God or His Son or to the Holy Ghost.

3

THAT summer Fenton Parre came out twice or thrice to Canaan. He talked with his steward about the farm but never laid down the law to him. He talked with his "Brother Fearing" about the Indians and did lay down the law. Swamp Town must be let alone. In no way was it Canaan's business. "And you understand, sir, I will not have Totonic badgered—no matter how many wives he has. The friendship of Swamp Town is more important than saving the Tawnies' souls. So think only of their friendship and not of their souls. And send away that Sam Bull. Never saw I a more worthless red man. Even Totonic's elder brothers are not so worthless as is Bull." Forethought heard him silently, but he liked not his words. After Fenton was ridden away, Forethought spoke critically of him

to his wife. Jazan felt that it was she, not her brother, who was attacked. But she was silent.

Fenton had been married for a year, and his wife had borne him a son. Yet not once had he taken her with him to Paradise. He was loath to bring Star and Bathsheba together. This was partly for the wife's sake and partly for the servant's. Star did not appreciate this kindness. She felt no embarrassment at the thought of the meeting, so why should Bathsheba? When her husband told her that once more he would be gone away to Canaan (for he wished to take part in the corn-husking), she said nothing, kissed him dutifully, and bade him God-speed.

As soon as he was gone she ordered her pony harnessed to the yellow chaise. She dressed herself neatly and warmly, and looked thoughtfully at Anselm sleeping in his cradle. She neither kissed him nor touched his still bald head (she was not demonstrative by nature), but she instructed the wet nurse and her own servants as to his proper care.

At Watertown, she knew, her husband would stop on business. It was there she overtook him.

The pony was small and the serving-boy who drove was small and smallest of all looked Star—gazing up at him demurely from under mouse-coloured bangs. So the whole disobedience seemed as small to the man as the participants. He laughed at her serious, questioning face and agreed that she might this time go to Paradise with him. Sometime she must, and the time might as well be now as ever.

It was always Fenton who gave in—never his wife. Now the yellow chaise rolled before him, and he followed behind, like a mounted servant. Star was so little and quiet it had never occurred to the man that she was a tyrant. In some ways she was docile enough. She had given up her English Prayer-Book with never a qualm and accepted the Puritan beliefs. Surely

she would rather sleep any night (even her wedding night) than be kept awake by his ardour. But she was obedient to him and passive, like a good child who is doing as its elders bid. Emotionally, there was no response in that delicate, flat little body, but in another way she had responded quickly—as the prompt arrival of Anselm proved.

Then she had no milk for the baby, which was fragile and fastidious as herself. Gravely, she summoned the wet nurses of Boston to her. And she called in not only the two ancient females (for whom she had sent back to England that she might be decently served in the New World) but her husband as well. She had bought a book on midwifery and with this in her lap before her solemnly examined the nurses' heavy breasts. One breast she found too flat, another lacked as long a nipple as the book recommended. And which did Major Parre (for she never called him "Fenton") fancy? He had other standards. He picked not by the book. The young wife of a poor lobster trapper blushed under his scrutiny. She understood, but Star did not. Little enough did Star understand, and yet in some way she bound her husband to her. A weak woman could not have done so. And never—not even after a year of marriage—had he fathomed her. She was still as unattainable to him as had been the fifteen-year-old child upon the *Sea Queen*. In his own way he loved her, and she him, but there was no understanding between them.

So the yellow chaise rolled through the gaudy autumn woods. Fenton Parre rode behind.

4

BATHSHEBA sat in the kitchen of Paradise. It was late in the afternoon. She was cleaning rabbits, a task distasteful to

her. She sat upon a stool by the hearth, an earthen crock beside her. Into this crock she flung lights and guts. She noted how like dead babies the rabbits looked once their paws and ears were off. The smell of the offal sickened her. She got up and stepped outside the door for a breath of purer air. How red and golden was the autumn world! She stood with bloody hands and gazed about her, and she saw a smart yellow chaise whirl up to the front door. Estella Parre (for she knew who it was) looked minutely elegant with her muff in her hands, her cream-coloured pony, her little groom beside her, and her handsome husband riding behind.

Bathsheba rolled down the sleeves of her dress. She would not return to her work today. Silently she slunk away to her own hut. The sight of Fenton's wife filled her with despair. Fenton meant nothing to her compared to Star.

She had noticed that the wife had come without her baby. Perhaps it was dead—dead and cleaned, with ears and paws cut off (its offal in a red crock), ready for the spit. And who was this woman anyway? Not his wife! *She* was his wife. This was his leman, his doxy. And she cursed the innocent creature who had never seen her face.

Most of the night she wept and moaned. Then at last she slept; but woke again and again in anguish of fear and foreboding—gasping and choking and crying out. Horrible dreams . . . that she could not quite remember. She had been pursued by wolves, by dead men raised up from the burying-ground back of the meeting-house. She pressed her hands to her aching head and could remember the gaping mouths of the dead in their winding-sheets—the lolling red tongues of the wolves. Fenton . . . when she had first seen him she had thought he looked like a wolf. Her mind was in a maze as she sat on the edge of her corn-shuck bed. She hardly was sure

where she was, for the horrors from which she had just escaped seemed more real to her than the familiar interior of her hut: the herbs, the boys' old shoes, the wolf rug, the bear trap, the books, the old fishing tackle, a skull. A pain, as if from Hell, zigzagged through her head. She put her hands to her forehead, rocking back and forth and moaning in her agony.

Then she remembered quite clearly. There had been eight dead, in their winding-sheets—far gone in decay—whizzing at her shrilly through the night. But was it a dream? How could anyone tell surely what is dream and what reality? Her nostrils twitched at the air. Yes, there was still about the hut a small smell of putrefaction. But of course that was the mutton Goody had let her take home . . . how long ago was it? Friday or Saturday? Last week or this? But all days were alike, weren't they? And all weeks. Her mind fumbled back through time and found no solid fact to rest upon, and forward into time to come and found nothing. She was convinced there was no time. She sat and marvelled that man had ever thought to mark the days with hours and the hours with minutes and the years with months and the months with weeks.

Difficult as time itself might be to cope with, one thing she did know. Goody had bade her come in time to the kitchen, for there was a sight of work to be done on husking day. That was why Fenton had come, and . . . that woman. In the fresh air she felt better. Her feet, as they touched the planks of the foot-bridge, felt like real feet—and her own; and some of her dread dropped from her. And yet she knew. This was a fatal day.

With some of her old confidence she entered the kitchen, where she was the last of the servants to present herself. The work was well begun, although the huskers would not come until afternoon. Goody Goad set her to the simple task of par-

ing apples, and seizing a knife and speaking to no one, she squatted on a stool in the corner. An ox had been slaughtered for the occasion, and part of its carcass had been spitted and set to roast on the hearth. She watched the turnspit dog busy about his work.

Women everywhere—rushing about, laughing. Jazan—ugh, she hated Jazan! She picked up another apple. Jessie—her rough Scottish accent cut through her over-sensitive ears like a blade of grass cutting the finger. She could hear the tone of this unpleasant voice, but she did not make out the words. She picked up another apple. Phoebe—that great dray mare! What was there about this heavy day to laugh and sweat about? And little Hagar . . . Hagar despised her for her sin, let her confess never so diligently. And neighbour women: Dick Blue's wife; Rue Redbank (now Rue Bailey) and her sister-in-law, the malignant spinster, Judith. There was not one there she would deign to address. But her eyes fingered through the crowd craftily for the small face of Star. Not finding it, she felt a relief that was half regret.

She drank in the marvellous smells of the cooking: the fat of the ox dripping into the fire, the pies baking, the spices being ground in the mill for the cooking and drinking. How many women were there in the room? It seemed impossible to count them. Stealthily, she looked about for Star.

An Indian woman (she was not sure of her name but thought she was Clara-something) was standing beside her. She alone showed marked interest in the distraught woman. She believed that such were holy folk and the words she might say holy words. Clara-Wood-Tree and the other Indians had known for a long time. . . .

Now the squaw was offering her a hunk of raw bacon that Jazan had given her and a wooden bowl of corn-meal gruel.

Hungrily, Bathsheba took this food. She often went for over a day without eating, but when she did eat she had a ravenous appetite. After this she felt better and wished to talk to someone, but there was no one whose eyes she might catch except only this Indian's.

"Squaw," she said. Clara put down the wild ducks she had brought up to sell to the Goodwife and squatted respectfully before this God-blessed woman. The white witch-man told them that God lived in the meeting-house—with the ammunition, the pews, and the Bible. She knew better. God lived in this woman.

"Um?" she questioned admiringly.

Bathsheba began, in the pretty flurried way that had suited her youth so well, but today, with her swollen face and tangled hair, seemed a very parody of female charm.

"Clara—that is your name, isn't it? Last night . . . I couldn't sleep. And I went for a walk. I think I went for a walk—but it may have been a dream. It does help one so much to walk when one cannot sleep, doesn't it? But in the midst of my walking, I was back in my bed again."

The old wrinkled woman watched her face attentively, trying here and there to grasp a word.

"I was still taking a walk, for I can remember the trees whizzing past me—never stopping—and the swishing sound they made. And they were full of wolves, and I began to run. But I must have been in my bed all the time, for I remember waking up, and the *first one* came to me. I was so frightened I put my head under the bed-clothes and screamed."

"Good," Clara encouraged politely.

Bathsheba's voice broke with laughter. She went on merrily.

"They were all *dead*, Clara . . . they had no eyes and their

limbs looked distorted and broken. So I began again to run. . . .”

“Good.”

“It is so odd, what one dreams. They were all dead, all eight of them. Dead—you know the word, Clara?”

Clara pointed to the portions of the ox sizzling over the coals. “Him dead.”

“Yes, he’s dead too. We’ll all be dead some time.” And she began to laugh.

“Why do you laugh, Bathsheba?” came Jazan’s voice from a long way off.

“Why,” she cried, and sprang to her feet, letting apples, knife, and parings all fall to the floor, “we’ll all be dead so soon! I never thought of that so clearly before. This house . . .” and she struck the summer beam where onions, herbs, and hams were hanging, “this board will last longer than any of us—longer than any child Fenton Parre shall beget on I don’t care how many harlots. And he really is my husband, and don’t any of you fools ever forget.”

She hurried out of the door and ran to the cattle-barn where men were hauling up the corn preparatory to the husking. She saw Gervase Blue standing by an ox team.

“Gervase, Gervase . . .” she cried, as though she had most important news.

“Well?”

“Tell your oxen. Tell them. . . .”

“What shall I tell them?”

“Tell them they will die, and be spitted upon ash and roast in a fire hot as Hell—and find their graves in the stomachs of men!”

After this she walked daintily back to the kitchen and, with a sigh, took up her work.

Jazan, noticing the strange mood Bathsheba had been in all morning, had gone to Fenton and begged him to keep his wife out of the kitchen. She did not say that she feared the big knife the woman had in her hand. This had he done by saddling Tobey, whom he kept at Paradise, and taking his wife on a pillion to Swamp Town to amuse her. They had their noonday meal with the Indians. But the Indians had not amused her much. She had no delight in strange things, but only in familiar. So they rode back. By the barn-yard he lifted her down and left her, as he led the horse inside.

So Star stood, a remote and strange figure, outside the barn and watched with some intensity a hen and chickens picking up spilled grain. Neighbours were arriving, and they greeted each other jovially and looked a little curiously at the young lady standing alone outside the barn door. She stared at them but did not address them; and they, guessing who she was, felt embarrassed, for they were as yet workfolk only. In spite of the son she had so recently borne, she still looked immature and virginal, but her face had grown wistful—like the face of a child looking out from behind the darkness of a pane. She wished she had not followed Fenton—wished she had not come. No one seemed to want her. If she had been alone she might have begun again on those tears she had shed so many of since her bridal night, although Fenton did not know.

A woman with haggard face and streaming orange hair was standing before her, breathing hard and staring at her. As God lives. The mark above her eyes! So this was she—this was Bathsheba. Her throat contracted and she tried to think of something pleasant to say, but no words came.

"You are not his wife," said the strange apparition clearly. "And those children"—she pointed at Jake and Varney rolling in the corn fodder—"those are not Salome's children—but

mine. He is mine, and they are mine, and some time he will come to me. And we will all live together at Founder's House—like wolves in their den . . . ha, ha. . . .”

Fenton came out of the barn. He was moving very quietly but a little stiffly—as a dog moves approaching a stranger dog, on guard against attack, yet ready for friendship. There was a look of caution and expectancy in his dark eyes.

“Oh, Fenton Parre,” she called to him, “there’s no need for it! I can see through your shirt. I can see the hair bristling up between your shoulders. Put down your hackles and wag your tail—you wolf!” She turned, lurched a little, then walked steadily back to the kitchen—humming, her head held high.

She and Goody Goad were the only ones of the household who did not go to the barn that afternoon but stayed in the kitchen to see to the last preparations of the feast. Goody chatted, but Bathsheba said no more than monosyllables. At last the huskers came in for their repast. Three tables had been set up in the hall for the gentry, but the common people ate in the kitchen, where Bathsheba sat listless in her corner.

Mr. Fearing pronounced the blessing. Faugh! Today Bathsheba hated him for a whitened sepulchre! Drinking and eating began about her, and shouts and the clumping of boots and the munching of food and snatches of harvest song.

Her head had been humming all day, but now this music seemed to increase. To drown it out, she too was humming. She could hardly hear the voices, songs, and the laughter through this infernal music which rose and fell in waves within her. But she looked at the roasts of meat, the pies, the jacks and flagons of drink, the great heaps of food, and thought proudly, “This is a great house I belong to.”

Dick Blue had recently brought home with him a wife—a poor young widow whom he had married almost beside her

husband's grave, in the wilds of Maine. No one thought Dick had done well by himself. The young wife was always weeping for the first husband and had little thought for the new. As she seemed to think herself nobody, the village was ready to agree with her. Her husband had told her that because Christopher had married his sister, she would be expected to eat in the hall with the grand people; but she had been afraid to put herself forward, and after a silent tiff between them, he had left her in the kitchen and himself gone into the hall.

But this self-effacing woman had pity for others, and her mother had told her whenever she herself was in distress to look about her for someone even more unfortunate. She looked about and saw Bathsheba, whose strange story she had heard. Like the rest of the village, she hardly knew how to address her. "Dame Sheba" the vulgar called her. The Court of Assistants had pronounced her to be "the Widow Bliss." This title never was used. Yet the sad goodwife knew this was correct. After some hesitation, she said timidly:

"Do you not find the beef very succulent, Widow Bliss?"

Bathsheba looked up at her in amazement. "Bliss? No one calls me 'Bliss.' You mistake yourself, my girl. I am Mistress Parre."

"Oh! I am sure I am sorry."

"But I haven't heard well all day. You did call me 'Bliss,' didn't you?"

"I only asked you if the beef was not succulent. . . . I meant no offence."

"Oh, but you *did* call me 'Bliss'—I can read it in your lying eyes. Everyone has conspired against me," she sobbed. "Everyone hates me. . . ."

She flung down her trencher and heedless of whose feet she

stepped on pushed her way to the kitchen door. And there, by some mischance, stood Star.

"You!" she screamed in fury, and almost knocking her over in her haste, she rushed past her and started on a clumsy gallop through dark evening towards Quantog's Woods.

5

THE moon had risen and was shining brightly when she came back from Quantog's Woods. She thought it later than it was. There were still sounds of merry-making from Paradise, and she heard the door open and the Ordes bidding good night. She was tired and wanted to go to her own bed, but when she crossed the foot-bridge and stood before her low door she was afraid. The vivid memory of the dead men and the wolves that had tormented her last night under this sagging old roof frightened her. The moonlight fell thin but clear through the trees, and she heard foxes barking.

She stood filled with foreboding. She dared not open that door and look within. Her heart raced and her breath whistled through her teeth. "Christ Jesus!" she whispered hoarsely. "Christ Jesus." What might not be waiting within to spring upon her . . . strangle her? She put her hands over her face and wept, for she did not know where to turn. Suddenly she cried out in a heart-breaking voice to her mother, whom she had not seen for many years. It was only in earliest childhood that there had been love and understanding between them. The years of discord were forgotten.

"Mother, mother!" she cried in her extremity. She saw, at the little window, her mother's face appear, loving and gentle as she could scarcely remember it. But even as she looked, it

twisted with death. The eyes fell in. The next moment the face of the corpse was gone.

Bathsheba, she said to herself, there is nothing to be afraid of. You must be a brave girl and walk straight in. Unconsciously, she mimicked the forgotten accents of her mother's voice. But she lingered, perplexed.

Looking about her, she saw in the moonlight a tall man standing midway upon the foot-bridge. His hat was pulled down over his face and his cloak muffled his jaws, as though he had a toothache. Fenton! Could it be Fenton had come to her? But the stranger was even taller and very thin. She felt a certain confidence, now she knew she was not alone with her spectres, and she called to the loiterer.

"Kind stranger—if you be a stranger—'tis so dark I cannot see your face. The lock on my door has stuck so fast I cannot get in. Will you not help me with so much as a push?"

The man said nothing, but he came to her quickly and stood by her side. There was a queer animal smell about him. As he fumbled with the lock, she said how the wooden locks found hereabouts were apt to swell with wet weather. In London, iron locks were common. Even at this moment she wished the silent man to know that she was no ordinary country hen wife. She chatted to him because she hoped that he would tarry a moment—give her a chance, before he was gone, to look about and see that all was well. The door under his hands flew open instantly. All was as she herself had left it that morning. She was so relieved she laughed light-heartedly.

"Kind sir, whom have I to thank? For I have not seen your face."

She stood within her door, and he stood without.

Then he dropped the cloak from about his face. She saw a long muzzle, the nostrils black and damp with health. She saw

brindled hair growing close about this muzzle but longer over the low forehead. She saw slit-like pupils contracting and expanding in the yellow eyes; the red tongue curling towards her; the flash of huge fangs; the loose and slobbering leather lips. The body, even the hands, were those of a man—but the head was of a wolf.

Scream after scream came to the huskers at Paradise; a woman in utter agony, screaming as she ran. Men seized guns and axes; and, having hunted much of the night and talked of wild cats and Indians, they came at last, at sunrise, upon Bathsheba. She was sitting stupidly under an elm-tree in a pasture. Her clothes were rent and her body scratched and bruised. At the sight of Fenton, who approached her with gentle words, a look of incredible horror came over her. She tried to run again, but Mercuricus English seized her. The face she turned on them was so apathetic, so mazed, they would hardly have recognized her. But at last being questioned as to what had befallen her, she told them that a wolf had come to her door—and it had looked like Fenton, only taller and thinner—and it had been dressed in men's clothes. This wolf had bitten her thrice; upon the calf, upon the wrist, and once "in the heart." She told this story simply, as a commonplace occurrence. Immediately she began asking each of the men in turn if they had a wife and how many children, and then showed them the wounds. There was a round bite—not in the least like a wolf's—upon her wrist and upon her calf.

"And only to my husband," she said with dignity, "may I show the wound upon my heart."

Fenton went to her. They all knew now that she was mad. He took her hand.

"Dear heart," he said, "I am not a wolf." For she drew back in terror at his approach.

"Oh, I know you are not," she exclaimed, with something of her old brightness. "The wolf, as I said, was taller—even."

And she said she was now ready to walk with the men back to Paradise. But she could hardly stand, much less walk. The young smith and Jimmy Orde made a queen's chair for her, and she sat thus enthroned, looking foolishly pleased with herself.

"What a triumph," she laughed, "to ride home in the arms of the two most likely bachelors in Canaan!" She seemed to have forgotten that Jimmy had been married for four years. Once she whispered in his ear: "I did not wish to embarrass Fenton before his friends—but it was he. He was the wolf."

For a few days she was apathetic and slept much. In this interval Fenton and Star went back to Boston. Then her frenzy came on her again, and Mercuricus and his father forged chains for her. Everything in reach of her she tore to pieces, even her own clothes.

Forethought Fearing, as was his duty, went to the possessed woman and prayed with her. His wife was with him, and the pity he showed to poor Bathsheba touched her. First Forethought sent away the curious and idle who gathered all day about her hut, peeking in as they might at a captive bear. Then he spoke her name and put his hand gently upon her scarred forehead.

"God give you peace, my sister," he said. Instantly she stopped plucking at her clothes. "I do not know why," he continued, "demons have entered into you, but I hope by prayer that we may cast them out. We must work together, you and I."

"I am, sir, chock-full of demons."

"Others have been before you, Bathsheba, and have escaped

them. With God's help, I hope this miracle can be worked in you."

He did not shrink back because the poor woman was half naked and very foul. Jazan knew he only saw her soul, and to it he addressed himself. He told her simply of the demons our Lord had cast out—especially those who entered into the swine of Gadarene. Seeing that she listened with intelligence, he told her more. His father had cast the demon out of an old mariner—and he himself, once, from a young girl. Then she began to make incoherent noises which he believed were the voices of the devils in her; and, laying aside his kindly manner, he spoke directly to them, cursing them in God's name and bidding them back to Hell.

After four days of this treatment, Bathsheba did recover and was unchained once more. So she worked a little more negligently at Paradise and spent more and more of her hours wandering about, picking herbs and gazing. Twice that winter her madness came over her, but each time she recovered again. People said that when mad she howled like a wolf and that she was able to take a wolf shape at will.

6

JAZAN lay awake and alone upon the broad deck of the canopied bed. From floor to ceiling it stretched, from wall to wall. She had been married for two years and a little more.

It was midsummer and the katydids were solemnly sawing their tiny fiddles. Crickets—this was the first night she had heard the crickets. Soon fall would come. She heard Gone-away bark in a questioning way. He, only, remained of Fenton's once famous wolf-dogs.

From the kitchen was a tiny scratching, a pounce, a squeak.

Hipse, the cat, was at work guarding Paradise from within—even as Gone-away guarded from without. A dog scratched himself, his leg thumping like a loom batten upon the kitchen floor. The turnspit dog. He slept by night in the kitchen, where he laboured by day. Not only had he been taught to turn spits but also to mount a little treadmill and churn butter. Goody Goad had had many (first and last) of these short-legged, rheumy-eyed little beasts, but they all seemed much alike. Nobody ever loved a turnspit dog, so sober and industrious were they.

She thought back through the years, measuring time not by human events but by the procession of animals that had come to Paradise (and mostly gone).

Motherly old Breeze, whom her father had always ridden. And he had liked the cats and their proud and offish ways—especially a tom called Maltie—and had not cared for dogs.

Gertrude. Fenton had shot Gertrude only last time he had ridden out from Boston. Jazan had seen his dark eyes brooding upon the woeful, half-blind, forlorn old bitch. He had taken a horse pistol from its holster upon his saddle and a spade from the shed. He had called Gertrude to follow him. Her hind legs dragged, but she wagged her tail at the sound and smell of her master. So they took their last walk to the top of Parre Hill—lovely, bare Parre Hill, a place of sunset and sunrise and far views. In time he had come back alone, cleaned his pistol, eaten heartily, and doubtless slept well. What, if anything, had there been in his heart? Doubtless not even Star might guess.

And Valiant had died in the arms of a bear.

And Sheepshead, in a death-fall set for wolves.

Now there was only Gone-away. He had become fat with age, gluttony, and laziness. He was always hanging about the

kitchen, begging for scraps, drinking up the milk set out for cats, and was suspected of sucking hens' eggs. He took his home-guarding seriously, but no wolf fighter was he now.

Horses, too. Goodness and Mercy. Those had been the names of the Galloway twins. She had learned to ride upon these ponies. Gone now.

But Tobey still reigned, king of Paradise. He was a good sire and grandsire. His descendants were sprinkled over the Bay Colony, and in Plymouth and Rhode Island as well. Some had been shipped (through Fayrweather and Parre) to Jamaica. For the Bay Colony were the best horse-breeders in the new world. He was no longer the dancing colt Fenton had ridden to Boston eight years ago, taking with him Agnes and Jazan. He was soberer in his ways, and his hide less dark and glittering.

She stirred restlessly. Why, a person might lie awake many a night remembering only the beasts one had known.

Beyond the partition she could hear Hagar and Forethought deep in whispering council. Hagar came thus to him, in his study, twice or thrice a week. These night vigils which he shared with his "sister" meant much to Forethought, for ever since Mr. Redbank's death he had clung to her, but they irritated his wife. Never did she feel that there was any impropriety, but she guessed the women-servants—who, like Hagar, slept on the second floor and knew when it was the lady crept downstairs to consult the clergyman—sniggered over the matter. She felt ashamed that her husband could so comport himself, even in all innocence, as to arouse giggles among servants. Goody Goad did not cherish Hagar as she had when she thought her destined to an early death. Jazan had heard the old woman speak sharply to her that she did not keep to her bed by night but must go trailing down to

bother the minister. Hagar did not bother the minister. So, on and on, they whispered.

The stair creaked. For a moment Jazan thought she heard a step upon it, and her heart paused. She thought one more person was awake this night—so full of the buzzing of insects and of man. Gervase Blue. He slept in the attic with the other men-servants. She guessed that, like herself, he often did not sleep well. Again and again, in the last two years, she had heard him come down the stairs and go outdoors. He always said (if questioned next morning) that he had tended a sick ewe or orphan foal. He had made sure a bar was up or the flax covered against possible rain. True enough. But Jazan guessed that if he had slept as tired working-men should sleep, he would never lie awake long enough to fret over these matters.

Often, for weeks on end, she would have no more word with him than good night and good morning.

The sibilant whispering went on. Now it seemed louder than cricket or katydid. She wished to rap upon the wall and beg them be silent or speak out loud. She could not. Ah, well, soon enough it would be day. Soon enough the cocks would crow in another day. And what, then, of that?

It was in vain that she told herself that Hagar shared no part in her husband's life that she would wish for herself. Jazan did not like the clever way in which he had reformed sinful old Canaan. It was this side of him and his pious meditations, which Jazan had come to dislike, that he shared with his sister-in-law. But what had she for herself? She supposed that he loved her, but it was night love only and it had proved but little—not the child they both wished. Now she knew that he believed it was their punishment. Because on March 26, 1670 (cut, for all the world to read, upon Mr. Redbank's

gravestone) . . . because of that night, God would punish him and her. And he humbled himself to his punishment. Never was there to be a son to play Forethought to his Peter. She was to be a barren woman—shut off and alone, with no one to share her solitude.

Fenton had two sons by now. Or rather, Star had two sons. For by the looks of the mousy, frail little things, Star had contrived them by herself without aid from Fenton. Agnes Fayrweather had four children—beautiful children—although Waitstill, her eldest son, was over-stout. Christopher had Jake and Varney, growing up away from him, at the mill. Their parents toiled patiently among the Indians of Gay Head and other remote places. Every spring had Salome borne and buried one more child. In outlandish spots had she buried these three dead babies.

There was a long pause in the whispering. Then it went on again. Oh, probably they were discussing this barrenness of Jazan's. Forethought was telling his satellite that he had done his part (perhaps a degrading part), but his wife had failed him. No Forethought to his Peter.

Now, did his dear sister think that perhaps, even after all these years, full church confession might not poultice the guilt? And God would deign to fructify his wife?

The next morning she was told what the matter was that Fearing and his sister had discussed in such hissing whispers all the night before. Jazan thought it was because of Forethought that Hagar was so tardy to start out on married life. But now it was settled this way. In the house which Fenton had promised to build for the couple there was to be one small chamber, and this was to be Forethought's own room. When he wished to "withdraw from the world" (the world,

to Hagar, had always been Paradise) he might hide himself away in this small "prayer-chamber."

"And you must never tell anyone, Jazan, where he is. It is to be kept utterly secret, so no one can get at him—as they can here."

"I should think he *would* want a place where he could get away from his congregation," said Jazan.

Hagar pursed her pretty mouth. "Not entirely his congregation. But, of course, in a big house like this, there are always folk coming and going. I don't think you realize how sometimes all this talk of cattle and swine and crops and money breaks in on his mood. And Phoebe . . . do you know, I've seen her carry mops and buckets into his study when he wished to work? No one here has ever considered the sanctity of his privacy."

"There has never been any privacy at Paradise for anyone."

"Don't I know that! And the soul does need a cell. . . . Abraham had the idea. Wasn't it thoughtful of him? He would feel proud to have Mr. Fearing come to our humble house whenever he feels the need. You won't tell anyone?"

"Not a soul." But she wished he would arrange to take all the waiting congregation with him. She foresaw the patient waiters in the kitchen. What was she to tell them? "Mr. Fearing has gone to his cell." It had a monkish sound. She shrugged her shoulders. Probably she would lie to them. And this, at Forethought's command!

Abraham, the least likely of all the Blue boys, had been the only one to accept his father's trade of miller. Goody Blue now realized that Paul and Dick had been utterly spoiled for the humdrum but respectable calling of their father by Fenton Parre, who had so early taught them that there was more money to be made by trading for furs. Hector had run away

to sea. Billy, having been apprenticed to a pewterer in Boston, had turned out no better. He had gone on to London with a silversmith, before his years of service were fulfilled. And so with her other lads. Very seriously did Abraham accept the responsibility of the mill. He was sober and steady, with no pastime except religious meditations. It seemed he could no more have been jealous of Hagar's devotion to Mr. Fearing than her devotion to God.

It was Hagar's wish that her new home should be so small she might care for it entirely by herself. She did not want any servant to dilute the holy atmosphere. She had seen enough of servants and their low ways about Paradise.

She bargained with Fenton Parre about the wedding contract, and in the end a curious document was drawn up. Paradise was to supply all the staples of life, even to a "sober horse to ride upon": so many apples; so much cider and flour, English, Indian, and rye; hams; poultry; beans; bacon; so much flax and wool, woven into cloth. She had fixed her life for herself so prettily there would be almost none of the usual household duties for herself and husband to perform, and a three-room house would be nothing for her to care for. So it was, with what looked to Canaan as almost poverty, she settled down to the most luxuriously idle life of any woman in town. She would never have to feed chicks or card wool; never pick up an apple or make cider; never direct servants and set them an example of industry. Even the milk was to be delivered daily at her door. Wealth was judged by big barns and great fields, the number of servants, the weight of the harvest. All these outer shows the little couple sternly set their backs to. They would have the quiet in which to cultivate their souls—not their lands. Into this peace, when he wished, the resident master of Paradise might escape.

No one had expected little Hagar to live long enough to be a bride, but at twenty she looked healthier than she ever had before. Although she still talked about preparing her soul for her real life (which would not begin until after death) she seemed quite ready to enjoy what was left to her in this vale of tears in her own way. Colonel Coffin registered their vows. In the evening there was a simple feast at Paradise, but it was a lugubrious affair. Christopher and Salome had not been invited to come up from Gay Head, and Hagar had written Fenton very sharply that his presence was not wished. Besides the Blues and the household at Paradise, there were but few guests; and these, uncomfortable and abashed. Certainly Hagar's wedding was not to be, as she feared, "an excuse for swilling."

Bathsheba had come wandering in and, in her absent-minded way, eaten enough for three days and wandered out again, and come back and gone on eating as though she had just arrived. She was growing rather stout. Dick Blue's nervous wife had made her usual unfortunate remarks and, as usual, in large words. And Priscilla Blue, who had been Agnes's great girlhood friend, for some reason chose to sit about and look insulted. They drank the bridal bowl of sack-posset, and Mr. Fearing pronounced an exhortation.

Then a few of the discouraged-looking guests took lanterns and walked over to the new house with the bride and groom and sat about the kitchen awkwardly. Hagar excused herself and went to the chamber. When she returned she was dressed in that shroud which she had stitched seven years before. Wrapped from head to foot in the snowy grave linen, only her excited face and transparent hands unmuffled, she said in a breathy little whisper:

"This is to symbolize for you all how, in the midst of life,

we are in death. I stand before you, a bride of but a few hours. Surely one might think this the happiest day of my life—yet even so, I am shrouded with my own mortality. Abraham stands beside me.” (She had taken him by the hand.) “He is sad, and in black. ’Tis only by fasting and prayer, and by setting aside the things of the world, that we hope to win to salvation and look upon the face of our Lord—Amen.”

Forethought Fearing, who was as surprised as anyone at this dramatic entry of death into the bridal chamber, had not a word to say; and even Jazan did not know whether his silence meant an approval too deep for words, or whether—being conventional and gentlemanly in his manners—he had disliked this parading of Hagar’s pious feelings.

Soon the guests went away, nor did they return to them that night. The old custom which permits friends to break in on a new-wedded pair was not followed. No one was so bold. So no one saw them as he in his drawers and she in her shroud knelt by the bed-head and prayed for their souls.

7

UPON a Sabbath Day late in the following January, Jazan, hooded and muffed in fur and wrapped warmly in a red cloak, walked slowly towards the meeting-house. She knew she was late, but she could not hurry. She was trying to compute the number of times she had heard her husband preach. There are fifty-two Sabbaths to the year, and two sermons every Sabbath. Then Thursday lecture. How much is three times fifty-two? One hundred and fifty-six. Or close to that. It was almost three years since Mr. Redbank’s death. So, let us say—three times one hundred and fifty-six. Her mind refused the task. She walked slowly, like a tardy child to school.

The Goose Common sparkled under white snow. Snow upon the roofs, lodged in the crotches of trees, creaking under foot. The sun was warm and dazzling. It was not for the short walk from Paradise to the Common that she had dressed so warmly. It was against the long cold hours within the unheated meeting-house. She did not wish to enter, sit down, and freeze—her body on the outside and her soul within.

She saw a knot of idle folk gathered about the stocks, which stood between the whipping-post and the town pound. Curiously, she stopped. Was this more of Forethought's doing? There was the rattle of a drum from the Drummer's Walk astride the meeting-house, calling all to worship. The idlers quickly obeyed. As they moved aside, she saw who was in the stocks. It was Johnny Pigge.

Johnny's stout legs were held before her in a wooden vice, and she sat broadly upon the snowy ground. Her dirty black hair had tumbled about her shoulders. Her face, never delicate—even in childhood—had coarsened. A very squaw she looked. Clinging close to her was Mercy, the only child of Johnny's to outlive infancy. For white folk the little girl put on an expression of stupidity as instinctively as young opossums pretend death. Her unwinking, beady eyes stared at Jazan.

"And why-for, Johnny," Jazan asked, in sad compassion, "are you sitting thus?"

She heard a tithingman kicking a yelping dog out of meeting. The dogs were always following their masters to service. Mr. Redbank had never minded if a dog or two joined his congregation. Mr. Fearing minded much.

"'Tis for adultery, darling, and the new cheeld I bore last week to Totonic." She pushed aside her waddings of fur and old blankets and showed a new-born and still purplish babe

against her naked breast. Quickly she covered the child again, for although the winter's day was sunny it was chill.

"Co! I knawed they would get me sooner or later. And you, Jazan, get 'ee to that mittin'-house youn'er—or 'ee'll be fined for absenting 'eeself from mittin'."

"Let them do as they please."

She heard the great doors slam shut, the creak of the bolts. She was shut out—shut out from her husband and from God—alone in the wintry sunshine with the renegade white woman. She heard the nickering of goats about the inn. She heard the frosty chirping of chickadees. Then the heavy marching of the opening psalm. Mercy still watched her with malignant, reptilian eyes.

"It was a month ago, Jazan, that the Town Fathers found out the truth. Colonel Coffin and your psalm-asunting man came to Zwamp Town, and they had frightened Pa so that he did confessed. And there was nosing I could do, and I confessed. Specially as your man spoke so very soft—and sly—now do I see. I thought they meant no grief. And Totonic, he thought so, too. But 'twas only for the birth of my babe they waited. Then they pounced! Zeems I never was married to Totonic. Moon Goes—she's his wife. The cheeldren I have borne to my husband are bastards. And 'tis like I'll be sent away from Zwamp Town." Her voice broke with rage. "'Tis naught of their concern. We're no praying Indians. I have been a fitty wife to Totonic. What right have they to come atwixt man and wife? I have never looked to another man since I married my Indian. Your father . . . he would have known how fitty was the life I led. Oh, Jude Parre!" she cried, and flung out her arms toward the tallest slate stone in the graveyard beside the meeting-house, "never did I know while you lived how foreright a man you war. And after you have come

chuckleheads and hollow-pots. And that—for your so-called godliness!” And she thumbed her nose at the meeting-house.

“Oh, hush yourself, Johnny,” begged Jazan. “I promise you things will not be so bad. Where is Totonic?”

“He borrowed a horse from Gervase Blue and has rid away to Boston to see Fenton Parre.”

But this did not fill Jazan with the confidence she might once have felt. In her mind she saw Totonic, a guest in Star’s house (for it was Star’s and not Fenton’s). Could the miserable small savage get any welcome there? And what could Fenton do? So respectable had he become! From within the clumsy clothes the babe began to whimper. When the woman tried to quiet it with her breast, she had no milk. Her tears ran down upon the small lavender skull of the baby. The child Mercy said nothing but stared at Jazan.

“When did you last eat, yourself, Johnny?”

“Not since yester morn. And I am chacking with hunger and my hands are clum with cold.”

“I’ll fetch you something from the inn.”

“ ’Twill do no good, darlin’. My little Hoapestill is doomed to death.”

Jazan touched the child’s head and murmured how pretty it was. She asked about its name.

“Hoapestill his name is, for I still had hoape when he was bornded. Ay! he’s a purty aptycock. I thought I had got away from them janzamy hypocrites. Faugh! I hate them.”

When she seemed quieter, Jazan went to Orde’s kitchen. There was no one about the big warm room. Everyone was in meeting. She found milk and heated it over the embers in a skillet. She got bread and cut what pleased her. She took a handful of smoked ale-wives and a big piece of cheese. In the

larder she set down the coins she had carried to meeting with her for the alms-basin.

When she came back Moon Goes, knowing all would be in the meeting-house, had come to see Johnny. The two women were not talking, but so heavy was the understanding between them Jazan felt herself an intruder. Moon Goes was beautifully dressed in the heathen manner. She did not, like other Indians, wear cast-off white man's raiment. Her soft doeskins were worked with porcupine quills. There were seams and lines on her face and grey upon her temples, but all Jazan saw was the beauty and great dignity the woman had. She saw the soft rich eyes, the quiet way she moved her hands, the grace of her body. At last she got to her feet and turned to go. Johnny was perturbed by her going.

"Jazan, her says her's agoin' back to her own people. Her is goin' to leave Totonic for me. *Her* believes that Totonic will be allowed to keep one wife—but not two."

"You know the Colony will never wittingly permit a white woman to live with an Indian. You are lucky to get off with a mere stock-sitting."

"Nor, they told me that's but the beginning on the matter. I'm to be haled to Cambridge and to Court. But now, Jazan, I beg that 'ee foller Moon Goes and persuade her not to think to return to her uncle's village."

"But she could not go in winter. It is thirty miles from here to where Sagamore John makes winter quarters. How far could she get before the sun goes down?"

Johnny agreed that Moon Goes must be speaking of some future day. Ale-wife after ale-wife and swallow after swallow of hot milk Johnny ate.

They did not know the time but feared the morning service

might soon be over. It would be better when meeting let out Jazan should not be found beside the stocks.

8

WEARILY, Jazan walked the snowy path to Paradise. Here, as at the inn, was no human life. But the dogs came gladly to meet her: Gone-away, a mastiff, and two hounds kept for hunting. Within the house was the turnspit dog, stretched close to the hearth. Hipsey, the cat, was curled in a chair with her new kittens. A sick lamb began to baa from its basket. These creatures now owned the house.

She stood in the middle of the kitchen and looked about her. Rarely, in all her life, had she been alone at Paradise. The sooty pots and fat red crocks seemed almost ready to speak to her. A suet pudding bubbled in a cloth. Above the kitchen hearth were seven nails and upon the nails hung seven pewter porringers. The smallest was the size of a walnut shell, the largest no bigger than a child's fist. These were used for measuring, but every child that came to Paradise thought they were toys. Whenever Jake and Varney (the little ruffians) came over from the mill, the first thing they wanted was a tiny porringer to play with, and how they would squabble over who got the smallest one!

Hams and strings of onions, ropes of dried apples, hands of seed-corn, hung from the blackened rafters. The pie press, the cheese cupboards, and shelves of glossy pewter and glittering copper and brass. . . . So this was Paradise!

Opening off the kitchen was the loom room, where the "great loom of Paradise" was set up. Sometimes an itinerant weaver was hired to weave more difficult webs. None such had ever left without saying it was the finest loom in the Bay Colony.

Now it was silent. Since Mr. Fearing's coming, the spinning-wheels had been removed from the hall to the kitchen. Like the loom, they were still.

She walked slowly into the hall. The cat purry-yowed, jumped down from her kittens, and followed her. She picked up the soft, thin, purring creature and set it on her shoulder. She envied it its maternity.

The hall of Paradise. A low dark room of twenty-three or -four feet. White plaster walls, great beams and girts and sills of mellowed oak. All red and brown and white was it. The ten-foot yawn of the hearth where a slow fire burned. Big fire-dogs and little fire-dogs, and two swords crossed above the lintel. Her father's sword was still draped in black. The other was the sword her father had given to Fenton upon his sixteenth birthday. Soon the lad had wanted a heavier weapon. And there were other odds and ends of armour. Halberds, pikes, a breast-plate of old-fashioned design. In the middle of the hall was a small standing-table covered with a red and white checked cloth. It was set for two people (who soon, presumably, would be coming home from morning service). Two pewter plates. Two silver cups. Two napkins. And a knife and spoon apiece. Beside Forethought's plate was his fork case. This newfangled French elegance had appealed to his fastidious nature. It was the only fork in Canaan.

Upon the wall tocked the misanthropic brass-crowned clock, spinning out time from its bowels. Jazan noticed that its entrails hung nearly to the floor (now no longer sanded). She got the key and wound the clock and thought how many times she had seen her father do the same thing. Once it had been the only clock in Canaan.

With the tock-tock of the clock in her ears and the cat rubbing on her shoulder, she crossed the entry and entered Fore-

thought's study. She stood in the middle of the empty room. There was Forethought's chair—once it had been her father's and had stood close by the hall hearth. She sat herself upon it. The chair seemed to welcome her, give her permission to loiter here for a little. She never felt that she belonged in Forethought's study. She looked at the shelves on either side the fire-place. These were of older, darker wood than the rest of the pine. They had been cut from the table-board. And she heard the angry voices of the Fearing library, brown and golden upon their shelves. They seemed to mutter at her.

There was one thing, small but unfathomable, in this whole matter. She had known nothing of Johnny and Moon Goes until this very morning. No one had told her. Forethought had not shared his discovery with her. Doubtless he guessed now that she had known for many years. Did he remember that shortly after their marriage he had asked her point blank whether Weetamoe was Johnny Pigge—and she had looked him squarely in the face and lied to him? It had been important to her that she had lied to him. Had it meant so little to Forethought he had not bothered to throw it up at her—now the truth had come out? Probably he had come to expect but little (not even truth) from his wife!

Gervase had known. Tonic had borrowed a horse from him. Not one word had he said to her of this matter, although he knew it would touch her deeply. Not one word! It seemed to her she was the centre of a conspiracy of silence.

She sat for a long time in her husband's study, without removing either her gloves or her warm hooded cloak, and she thought about marriage. Agnes and Jonathan. That, surely, had been a marriage of expediency, and yet during eight years it had shaped well. But it had been love that had driven Fenton to his sixteen-year-old bride, and her to him. She guessed

there was much amiss between them. Abraham and Hagar had loved (at least you might call it that) from the days of their biggins and falling sleeves. Already Abraham was drinking heavily—and not for delight, as happy men drink, but alone and for solace. She, herself. Truly she had loved Forethought—and he, her—but no true marriage had grown between them. She doubted that it ever would. What, then, had love to do with a happy marriage? She thought of the people whom she had known, and it seemed little enough. Luck, only, was it? What, what, what? She could not guess. She believed that if she had followed Fenton's wish and married that girl-faced Jan Royale—with eyelashes an inch long—things would have gone better for her.

Then she got up and went once more to the hall.

This was indeed Paradise! It was her father, and the mother whom she could not remember. Her childhood, her life, and she loved it with vehemence. She went on into her own bed-chamber. She still half expected the old house would speak to her clearly.

From top to bottom and side to side, her room was filled by the bed and there was little else. A chest or two for clothes. One stool, but no chair. The canopies and coverlet were white and gold damask from Venice. She disliked their elegance in the small room. She would have preferred a simple patchwork quilt. There was a linen band her husband had pulled from his box; decided was not fresh enough; crumpled up and flung upon the bed. It was only on his preaching days he ever flung personal stuff about.

But there upon the bed was another thing. At first she thought it was a smooth purple snake. It was over a fathom of the finest wampum. Moon Goes' uncle had given this to his niece on her marriage day. So the squaw had not gone back

to Swamp Town, but to Paradise. She had entered and left on the bed of her friend this token of esteem. What next did Moon Goes intend?

Jazan ran to the kitchen door and, after casting about a little, she picked up the moccasin tracks of the Indian woman. She went to the back entry where saddles and such things were kept, and picked out for herself a pair of snowshoes. It was the first time this winter she had put them on. The snow was high as a man's knee, and she believed that, with the advantage of the snow-racquets, she could quickly overtake the other woman, in spite of the head start Moon Goes had.

The yard dogs were delighted to see her on snow-racquets. They came to join her—Gone-away, the two hounds, the young mastiff. She was glad of their company.

Moon Goes had gone down to the river, which was a smooth, white road, tedious to plough through in moccasins but ideally suited to racquets. The squaw had headed towards the mill.

Soon after the mill, the cultivated lands were passed. The forest in places came down to either bank. Sometimes the river was almost lost in marsh. The Indian woman had ploughed through snow often higher than her knees. The dogs did not break through the crust. Jazan's racquets held her up.

When she had walked for an hour there was a confusion among the dogs, who, with yelps of joy, turned back to greet a friend. It was Gervase Blue, coming along on his racquets at a swing trot. He was the only person she could have endured to have with her, and her face said as much.

He was panting slightly. "What do you do, Mrs. Fearing?" (It was three years since he had called her Jazan.) "Your husband is in a fine state that you absented yourself from meeting. I found the racquet tracks and said I'd follow you. He forbade me . . ."

"But you came?"

"Ay! I came." She understood why Forethought referred often to his "insolence." "And what's amiss?"

"Moon Goes."

And she explained quickly what had happened and that she feared the woman intended to slay herself.

Gervase walked ahead breaking a trail, and not speaking. She watched the rhythmic movement of the shoulders, the deliberate sure swing of the encumbered feet. She noted he had shortened his natural step so that she might fit her racquets into his tracks. Little enough had they spoken and sad was their errand, but she felt no more alone. She looked about her and saw the world was beautiful—so white the snow, so blue the sky.

They stopped to glance at other tracks upon the smooth roadway of the frozen river. Deer had burst from yonder thicket and sprung in terror across the snow, and after them had come the wolves. The dogs sniffed and bristled, slunk, and clung close to the people. This winter the wolves had been particularly troublesome. They had killed a heifer in the Baileys' barn-yard.

"And hark. . . . Did you hear that?" asked Gervase. Far away upon the snowy hills came a long, creaking howl. Old Gone-away, who once had been a good wolf-dog, limped so close to Jazan he stepped on her snow-racquets.

Gervase got his mistress to rest a moment on a boulder—but not for long. Both believed Moon Goes' life depended upon their speed.

"I think," he said, "she is trying to find an opening in the ice so that she may cast herself in. I noticed she stopped for a moment at the place where Kettle Brook joins the river. It thaws early. But if it's open water she is looking for, she will

have to wait for next month. There's no desperate hurry. An Indian does nothing without several hours of magic. She will build a fire and howl a little." As he spoke, the wolf began again—this time closer at hand.

But faster and faster, Jazan walked. In spite of the cold she was dripping with perspiration. Her hood was flung back; her red cloak open at the throat. Her heart pounded. She must be in time. It was not alone Moon Goes' life that she was trying to save. Partly it was her love for her husband. If he had driven this woman to death . . .

The river took a sweeping curve to the right and ran out of the forest into marshland. Here it had broadened like a pond. The snow was unmarred except for the tracks of the moccasins. The dogs, forgetting their fear of the wolves, leaped ahead, and disappearing about the bend, gave an excited cry. Gervase and Jazan exchanged smiles. Instantly the crying stopped.

The marsh grass had grown during the summer to the height of a man's waist. Now, burdened with snow, it looked like a thatched roof continuing along the borders of the stream. Leaning against this shed-like barrier was the figure of Moon Goes, and the dogs, with bristling backs and clamped tails, sniffed about her. By the attitude of the dogs, they knew that she was dead.

Gervase tried to stop his companion, wishing to spare her the sight of so much blood. But Jazan walked boldly to the dead woman and stood before her, her head up and her hands clenched. There was no pity in her face as she gazed at the pitiful sight before her—only a slow dark rage.

She reached to Moon Goes' feet and picked up a horn-handled knife of the finest English steel. It was not only to leave the wampum that Moon Goes had come to Paradise. She had

taken this knife from the kitchen, and in this lonely spot she had sat herself down—never stopping to make magic—and had cut the arteries of her ankles and her left wrist. So, slowly, and it would seem peacefully, she had sat and watched the scalding life-blood melt the snow with its heat.

Jazan stood, the bloody knife in her clenched hand. She had not a word to say. Gervase glanced at her rigid face and glanced away again.

9

WHEN Totonic came back from Boston on his borrowed nag, carrying a letter of advice from Major Parre to Colonel Coffin, he was told of his old wife's death and he went to fetch the body home. The wolves had been at it.

As was the custom in winter-time, Moon Goes was buried under the fire-pit of her own wigwam, for here the ground never froze. When she was buried, Totonic slept the night with her spirit. He wished to ask whether or not she had been done to death by others, so he took a wooden bowl of water and set it at the far end of her dwelling and lay himself down to sleep. It was an old magic, and he had heard it would always tell the truth. He slept peacefully, although the night was cold and there was no fire. In this hut of death no fire would ever be lighted again.

In the morning when he looked into his bowl, the water had grown very dark. It had changed into blood. So he knew that he should consider Moon Goes to have been murdered. He took the thought quietly, sitting cross-legged before the bowl. There was no one whom he would tell. Not even his brother, Fenton. A miserable night he had spent as his guest. He knew well enough why it was the small wife had been ill and had gone to bed before supper, and why she did not get

up until after he had gone in the morning. All Fenton's efforts at hospitality had been forced and lifeless. He had made little of Johnny's danger. He had not (as once he would have) got out his horse and ridden back to Canaan with him. He had only written that letter which Totonic had already burned. Then, to make matters worse, he had given him too many gifts. It was as though he were trying to make his purse do the work his heart refused.

For a month after her death everyone knew that Moon Goes had appeared again and again in the Pastor's study. He had grown white and worried, fidgeted in a manner new to him; and then, for some weeks on end, slept not one night under his own roof but always in the "prayer-chamber" at Abraham Blue's. One night, when all the able male Indians were away, a group of young hoodlums went to Swamp Town; beat off the Indians and their dogs with sticks; broke into the death-hut where Moon Goes was buried. They drove a stake through her body, which was the only known way to keep a suicide from wandering. The ghost of a suicide, like the ghost of a woman who dies in labour, was especially malignant.

Jazan was indignant and expected Forethought to uphold her, for he had never taken much stock in country superstition. To her amazement, she found he approved this action—even if he would not say that he did. Anyway, soon after this he returned to his own bed, and his face cleared a little. He and Hagar were almost more inseparable than ever. Abraham said again and again how grateful he was to God for sending so good a man into their life—but he began to drink too much and always when alone in the mill.

All the Blue men were heavy drinkers, but of a convivial

sort. Abraham kept his bottle hid away in an old bin. No one saw him drink but everyone knew—except his wife. She had her own ideas about the sinfulness of the body's pleasures and there was little liquor on her board. She was much laughed at because she maintained that both she and her husband were the better for the unwholesome cold water they drank. He disguised his breath before returning to his own roof-tree by eating raw onions.

IO

JAZAN had written Salome, begging her to come to Paradise for her next confinement. This was like to be late in spring. Not once, since her own house had burned and she had followed her husband into the wilderness, had she missed a single spring. The two-day-old Mary they had buried in Natick. William, at three weeks, lay in an Indian burial-ground at Gay Head. And there was an unnamed child as well. She accepted the invitation, but in her enthusiasm for her work she put off the time of departure. And so, at Marlborough, her quick and easy labour overtook her. This infant, too, was buried, but in sanctified ground back of the meeting-house.

The next day they rode on to Paradise. Salome was not in the least cast down by her maternal misfortunes. She cheerfully recounted the details of the births and deaths of her children and described the outlandish places where she had buried them. She believed this had been according to God's will. She and her husband were to give themselves up utterly to the Indians. They were not destined to the joys of family life. The birth and death at Marlborough had been one more sign to them.

As she prattled on, Jazan wondered . . . if the child had lived might she not have felt her missionary work was unap-

preciated? She marvelled at this woman who had such genius for accepting everything as the best. But when Jake and Varney came over from the mill, where they lived with their grandparents, poor Salome wept and wept. Her children—and yet not hers. The boys made no pretence at being pleased to see her. She was a stranger to them, and she embarrassed them with her kisses and doting words. They were so beautiful, young, bold, and virile; their mother wept to see them. In appearance and manner they were as alike as ever twins may be. It was only those who knew them best who saw that Varney was at heart more timid. Jake was the leader. Varney copied Jake.

For the first few days Salome talked all the time. Every neighbour who came in heard the same stories. They were good stories, but they grew tedious. Over and over she told of Sagamore Weegametic's baptism and comfortable death. Of the sad mistake Mr. Eliot had made in his first translation of the Bible into Algonquin. For the Virgin Mary he had used the word which means virgin man. This had greatly confused the Indians, who considered Christ's birth a greater mystery than even it seemed to white men.

The change in Salome did not, after all, seem so great, although she had aged with the rough life she had led; but the change in Christopher was considerable. It was mostly in his manner of speech. In the old days he had been too quick and vehement. Now, he spoke rather slowly. But when Jazan thought how necessary it had been for him to speak slowly to his converts, in English or in careful Algonquin (for he never became nimble in this tongue, as was his wife), she saw how natural the change in him was. He asked very distinctly at table for salt or ale, as though even here a quicker speech would not be understood. In the old days he had quarrelled

with everyone; with his father, with the authorities at Harvard, even at times with Cousin Macey, and surely with the whole world over Bathsheba.

It would have been impossible for him to have sat day after day with Forethought Fearing without breaking the peace. Now he had grown beyond foolish bickering but, sadly enough, seemed to have early outgrown his youth. He was not quite thirty, but his hair had receded at the temples, his face and figure were stolid and heavy. He was one of those men destined to almost endless middle age. Youth had left him early, and old age would come late. At sixty, even, he would look very little changed from thirty. In comparison, Fenton, who rode out to visit his brother, in spite of the lines on his face, had an air of swift, implacable youth. These two brothers talked much of the Indians; and Jazan, who often sat with them, noticed one thing. The military officer wished to know what was the chance of an armed uprising. These "praying Indians," for instance—would they cleave to their Bibles and their Englishmen? How many of the heathen had muskets, and from whence came the ammunition? All this side of the matter did not interest the missionary. It hurt Jazan that Fenton seemed to have forgotten that the Indians were his friends, thought of them only as possible enemies—and not once had he gone to Swamp Town.

One more thing Jazan noticed during the visit of the Christopher Parres. These two were truly man and wife. Never had she heard of another couple so violently flung into marriage as they had been. Jazan remembered how Salome's garrulity had once irked her husband. He had been chagrined at the birth of the sons—as if ashamed that anyone should know that he could find pleasure in the unloved woman. And Salome herself, in spite of all her smiling, had at that time been in

despair. Jazan had almost despised Salome that she had come to love Christopher so soon and for no reason anyone could see except that she was married to him. But now-a-days for Christopher home was not proud Paradise nor the memory of fair Founder's. She doubted it was the bark huts he shared with Indians. Home for him was where Salome was. And so, for Salome. Once home meant so and so many sheets, towels, pots, stools, and such. Now it was wherever she might be with Christopher.

Forethought, who had a quick and curious mind, began taking lessons from his brother-in-law in Algonquin in exchange for French, which Christopher read easily and spoke poorly. He became so absorbed in this new task he went very rarely to his prayer-chamber. So every day Hagar came to Paradise. Jazan could tell almost to the moment how much time Forethought spent with his "sister," for if he did not go to her she would always come to him. She saw that there was a deep and true understanding between these two. She could not envy this intimacy, but she did resent it.

One day she went to the mill to ask why the flour for Paradise had not yet been ground. Little Abraham was there alone, sitting disconsolately upon a sack. The wheels were turning, but not used. He answered her evasively, and she saw that he was stupid with drink. As she turned to leave him, he called to her.

"Sister Fearing, I'll offer to *you* what I have offered to none other."

He offered her his bottle of rum. She angrily declined.

II

ONE day in summer-time Phoebe herself broached the matter of her marriage to Mr. Fearing. He had called to her from his study to fetch a draught of ale from the cool cellar. She found him, listless with the August heat, flung down in Mr. Parre's great-chair. As soon as he had taken the refreshing tankard from her hand, she began.

"Master, with your permission, there'll soon be a marrying here at Canaan."

He drank slowly, deliberately, indifferent to the woman.

"Marriage, they say, is a holy state—nor have the Canaanites been backward in this matter."

"In fact, sir—'tis a marrying here at Paradise."

His tankard was quickly set by. "You speak for yourself, Phoebe?"

"Ay, for my own self."

An unaccountable look of wonder and relief crossed his sensitive face. For four years he had hoped this would happen. He had always known why it was the steward was adverse to marriage, and he had resented the young man's silent fidelity to his wife. Unconsciously, in every way he had put barriers between them. This summer she had not so much as suggested that she would like to go out with the sheep-shearers, ted the hay, or carry cool beverages to scythemen or threshers. The world of earth and sun, growing things and herds—that world where Gervase reigned—he had shut to her. She had a new and frailer beauty. It was true, as he said—somewhat hopefully—she did look more like Hagar. But if the body had indeed waned the soul had not waxed.

"It has been a long time coming about, Phoebe. But I am

glad for you—and for him as well. You intend to bide on at Paradise?”

“Yes, sir. It suits us both, although we might get uncleared land for the asking if we would move out to the wilderness of Brookfield or Lancaster. But we like it best here, at Paradise. And the Parres are generous beyond all reason.”

“This will be good news to Major Parre: two such redoubtable servants wedded together and content to stay on. What the Goodman and the Goodwife Goad were, in the past, you two shall be in the future.”

“We hardly look to *that*, Mr. Fearing. Maybe I’ll take the Goodwife’s place—she’s been training me to it. But Gervase Blue . . . he’ll be steward here forever.”

“That’s what I mean, you and Gervase Blue. . . .” He did not catch the wistful way the stout young woman named the steward. If he had, he would have known. “Why, I am so pleased about this matter I’ll give you a small dower myself—say, a pound or two—I’ll be glad to.”

Phoebe looked at his excited face, and she understood. “’Tis not what you think. ’Tis not—Gervase Blue.”

He was on his feet—his face coloured with unreasonable irritation.

“Woman, what do you mean? How dare you—after all the talk and scandal of your relations with this Blue—tell me you have changed your mind and gone off in another direction?”

The poor girl was confused and said nothing. It was long since there had been talk of her and Gervase. If once she had chased him about the kitchen and boasted that she was going to marry him, no one remembered now. Forethought went on, as though four years were only yesterday.

"I have excused a great deal in the conduct of you two, because I looked for honest marriage to poultice your indiscretions. And who in Heaven's name is the *new* man?"

It was not a "new man," but the one she had been going with for two years now.

"Jack Truly, sir."

"Jack Truly!" he exclaimed, as though nothing could be more unexpected; in a way, nothing more shocking. "No, no! If Fenton Parre wants to give his consent to such a matter, he may. After all, it is he—not I—who employs you. But I will not. No, never—no!" Then suddenly: "Now leave me and send me Gervase Blue. No, I don't want you to say he is at the saw-pit, the smithy, or gone to Concord. I want you immediately to find this Blue and send him me."

Phoebe curtsied and left him. He waited in an agony of suspense, but Gervase did not come.

Forethought ordered his dinner brought in to him. He would not leave his room. He said he was working on a sermon. The hot afternoon wore away. Gervase did not come. Insolence—such insolence! Now it seemed to him he was physically unable to leave the room. It held him in a charmed circle which only the coming of the steward could break.

Close to the early supper hour he heard the dogs bark with joy. He stole to the window and looked out. Gervase Blue, mounted on Tobey (for he was the only one among the servants allowed to ride him), came in through the gates. The stallion lifted his head and whinnied affectionately to his mares and to his home. So it was not insolence—as half he had hoped—that had made him slow in coming to the study. He saw Phoebe heave out to him, take the horse's bridle as the man swung off, and lead the animal to the barn.

Gervase was knocking at his study door. Fearing had no

idea exactly what it was he wished to say to him. As in the old days, when he had preached in his father's church, he was relying upon the inspiration of the actual moment.

"Come in, come in, Blue," he said, with a certain forced good-fellowship. Gervase came in quietly, his hat in his hand.

"Phoebe said you were in the greatest haste to see me, sir."

Forethought gestured irritably with his hand.

"No, no. There was not the least haste. Today or tomorrow—next week even—would suffice for what I have to say. Phoebe must have exaggerated my importunity. . . . Will you seat yourself, please?"

There was a small table by a window, and the two men sat together with this table between them. Gervase was not dressed in the blue smock he usually wore during his working hours, but in black doeskin breeches and a plain, but obviously costly, white shirt. Forethought fastened his eyes upon the shirt. Why should a servant own such an elegant piece of raiment? He looked at the serious, sunburned face watching him. Why should a farm servant have those small shallow features—those eyes, blue as a horizon washed with rain? For the first time he noticed the slight cleft in the short square chin. A great deal of pains had been taken, it would seem, in making the steward's face. Why didn't this fellow look more like Jack Truly? Now *there* was a good honest yeoman face for you—lips that met like the edges of a muffin, coarse jaws. Jack Truly would have been becomingly confused to be thus seated privately with his master.

"I was in Sudbury all day, sir. I came as soon as might be."

"And what takes you to Sudbury? Some matter of courtship, I warrant?"

"No. Last summer—it was so bad a time for us—I sold

five of our best sows to a man in Sudbury. Three of them I wished to buy back again. And I did."

"You were too proud, I suppose, to drive the creatures back with you?"

"I am sending Hosea over tomorrow with a cart."

"Might not you have better done the driving yourself?"

"I thought not."

Even at this slight excuse Forethought's temper began to rise.

"I must warn you not to get above yourself. A steward—especially one without name of his own—is not a gentleman. Humble work will in no way hurt you. Possibly, it would be good for you."

Gervase felt the injustice of the accusation. There was no work so dirty or dangerous or fatiguing that he ever refused it. It would have been a waste of time if he had dismounted and attempted to drive the stubborn sows before him the whole eight miles between Canaan and Sudbury. Hosea would carry over a load of flax-seed to a farmer and bring back the sows. He said nothing in his own defence, but he knew he was attacked, and the muscles formed on his forearms.

"One more thing. You are twenty-five now, and I believe you should think of marrying. You are letting Jack Truly step off with Phoebe. Possibly that will influence Major Parre to put Truly in as steward here."

Gervase almost laughed. "No, no—I have no fear. Married or single, Fenton will wish me—always."

"Why should you be so arrogant?"

"Why should I not?"

"But why are you so stubborn-set against marriage?"

"You will not like my reason."

Forethought's hands trembled to the tight bands about his

neck. Would the fellow say it . . . would he dare? "Anyway, speak out to me."

"I do not wish to marry anyone I do not love."

"Love! What romantic imbecility is this? What has a man in *your* station to do with love? Be thankful if you get a decent homely body who will be faithful and buxom to you!" He pushed back some papers upon his table with a gesture of anger. "What do you think you are—a fine gentleman of our King's bedchamber? No. You are a simple working-man. All you need is a partner."

"If I felt as you do . . . I should have married Phoebe."

"In human decency, you had no choice. You got the poor, innocent young thing talked about. She is lucky that an honest man will marry her—after you."

This attack was unjust beyond endurance. The curl in Gervase's lips grew menacing.

"Did you send for me," he said boldly, "only to contumace and upbraid me, sir?"

But Forethought himself did not know why he had sent for him; why he had been in such a state of mind the long hot hours he had waited for him. He usually spoke with frankness and honesty to the humble folk, and in this way he had won their respect. Now there was something sly, affected, in his words.

He said, as many have said: "I honestly wish to help you. 'Tis well for each of us to know our faults. Then we may strive to overcome them, with humble thought and prayer."

"And my fault?" The muscles that had first formed upon his arms, then about his lips, moved along the jaw-bone.

"An unfitting pride above your station."

Gervase veiled his eyes. He was determined not to speak

out. If he broke into a quarrel with this man, what would it mean? Fenton would back Gervase, and never a doubt but Forethought would, in anger, leave Paradise—perhaps go to live in Mr. Redbank's parsonage, move on to Boston—and Jazan would go with him. At that moment, one word of temper from him would lose Jazan the thing he knew meant most to her: the old house of her father, the broad acres of Paradise. The self-control Goody Blue had long before taught him stood him in good stead. He got to his feet.

Forethought noticed how lightly the strong but curiously delicate body was poised. He stood more like a young cavalier stepping out to a duel than a farm servant humiliated by the reproof of his better. And that white shirt. How came he to be so dressed in modest elegance? Suddenly an ugly certainty came to him. He had noticed that Jazan, the spring before, had sewed and sewed upon some fine white linen.

Gervase said: "Thank you, sir, for your concern for me. And I will try, in the future, to carry myself in more seemly wise."

Unreasonably, Forethought exclaimed, "That shirt! From whence came that shirt?"

Gervase, in amazement, glanced at a sleeve to see what shirt he might have on. Now was he mystified.

"The flax came from Paradise. And Goody, or one of her maids, wove it. . . ."

Forethought was on his feet. He was hardly, now, attempting to control himself.

"In God's name, tell me who sewed you that shirt!"

"When Salome Blue was here last spring, she cut it and sewed it me."

"I don't believe you!"

"Very well."

"Why should Mistress Parre make *you* a shirt?"

Gervase's hands were clenched, but still he answered quietly.

"For that I let her little sons go with me as I plough. She wished to show me, I think, she appreciated the care I take they are not hurt."

"It would show respect to a lady's gift to save it for Sabbath usage—but let it pass, let it pass "

Even Forethought felt the servant was telling the truth.

After he had gone, Forethought sat on for a while alone in his study. He had promised Phoebe a pound—or even two. Well, he would give it to her.

He remembered how first it had been Gervase's arms that had hardened, then his mouth. Then the muscles had moved upon his cheeks. But at last he had stood with his hands clenched, as men's hands tighten about a knife.

I 2

MAY, June, July—and the year was 1674. Three months. Jazan counted them upon fingers grown white and thin. Six months more to go. The child would be born in January. And yet she had not spoken of this matter to her husband. She knew how great would be his joy. He would believe himself forgiven (little enough did he care whether or not his wife was forgiven). She knew his heart was set upon a son. But she was loath to tell him, for now the child was hers and she had company in her solitude. Let her but speak of this matter to Forethought and, unborn though it was, he would seize upon it. His child—not hers. She but the fructifying element for his seed. A son, at last, "to play Forethought to his Peter."

And yet, suppose it were a daughter? Was there not an even chance? She thought of girls' names that she fancied. Not her own name. Jazan seemed a dark and heavy name. She had always liked Ursula, the "little bear woman." So her father had named the pet raccoon she had had as a child. It seemed no strange thing that she should wish to call her daughter for a pet raccoon. The baby would be playful and roly-poly as a cub. She and the "little bear woman" would hunt arbutus in spring together and eat from blueberry bushes in summer and checker-berry plants in fall.

Isobel. That had been the name of Forethought's own mother. She liked it not. It had a weak and haughty sound.

Mavis and Fidelia. These, too, were, for some reason, to her out-of-door names. But her mind always swung back to Ursula, and she loved the unborn thing (male or female, God alone knew what) under the name of Ursula. But she kept this name from her lips and the truth of her condition in her heart.

In August she had no choice but to confess. Every morning, on waking, she was overcome with nausea. Four serene and happy months she had had, and then her body had revolted against its burden. Her legs swelled and her pulse fluttered. In five minutes Goody Goad knew the truth, and Jazan heard, from where she lay upon her bed, the old woman speaking to Mr. Fearing. They stood outside her door and in the kitchen.

"'Tis only natural for a woman in her condition. Breeding women are often thus, or even worse, and yet bear stout nine-months infants."

"But surely my wife is not with child?"

"Not with child? She is four months along!"

His voice was hurt and incredulous. "Never did she speak of this matter to *me*." He did not go to his wife as she lay

upon her sick bed. The day was hot. Jazan heard someone, and she thought it was her husband, go to the pail of water by the larder, scoop up a gourdful of water, and drink long and slowly.

She turned upon her side. Ursula—Ursula! But no—Ursula would never have sickened her so. 'Twas something inimical to her that grew within her. Tired as she was, she slept.

When she awoke she found her husband standing in the little space betwixt wall and bedside. First he sat on the edge of the bed, holding a pale long hand. Then he lay beside her and put his arms about her and pressed his face to her face. "Jazan, Jazan," he said. Her name never sounded upon his lips as upon any other. "I understand," he said. "I know how it was you did not wish to tell me." She said nothing. "You have been lonely, too." This was true, but she had not thought before that he himself suffered even as did she.

"Yes, but I think perhaps I was always lonely—and always will be."

"I believe a new life will open up to us now. Jazan, I promise you: if you will share with me, I will share with you. I want things to be different between us. I do not want to feel you locked away . . . from me."

"It was you who locked me out."

"I know it." He went on quickly in that low troubled voice that always touched his wife's heart: "Do not think I have been so happy in Canaan, for all I have put a bold face on the matter. I have laboured almost beyond my endurance for my church, even as my father would have laboured, and my ardour has borne fruit. And yet"—his voice winced—"I could not ever tell Hagar. I have not actually *felt* God . . . behind me, in my life—as once I commonly did."

So he had told her his secret, and she had told hers. He

could not have told Hagar, and he wished Jazan to know his discontent. She had always known. He had not found, in his strict and driven religious life, the peace of God. "That peace which passeth all understanding." That peace Christ left with us all—if we have the power to take it. Not even in Hagar's prayer-chamber had he found that peace. . . .

"And, Jazan . . . in spite of all you may think, I want you to know one thing: I do love you."

This, too, she had always known.

13

GOODY GOAD, from her forty years of experience with child-bearing women, and Bathsheba, from her "arts," both prophesied a difficult labour. Surely, unless something was wrong, no woman of twenty-four would have passed four years of marriage and produced nothing. At first Forethought tended to pooh-pooh their worries. Did not other breeding women have swollen legs, dropsy, and fluttering heart-beats, and yet produce healthy children? But at last, when his dread was aroused, there was no length he was not ready to go. He was always after Jazan. How did she feel? Was she not, for her condition, very thin? Could she not eat more? Did the child beat hard against her body? For if so, it was surely a son. He was always bidding her to rest. He forced her to drink quarts of sage tea, which he knew would prevent miscarriage.

He read to her a great deal from the Bible and wished her to think only on high and holy matters so she might shape the soul fairly within her body. He read to her from his own father's works, both published and unpublished, and talked to her at some length about this great man. Jazan could feel but little interest over the coming of the son; for although Goody

would not pretend to say what the child would be, both God and Bathsheba had given Mr. Fearing assurance.

On the night after the quickening, a torrent of meteors had brightened the sky. And Forethought had had great dreams. Sometimes he would join his wife where, on hot afternoons, she sat under the willows by the riverside, and try to encourage her by recounting these dreams.

Once he had dreamed that he lay spread out upon the bottom lands of Paradise. These were the richest fields they had. And as he lay there upon the bare earth, arms and legs outstretched, he had felt himself part of the ground and he had begun to grow. His whole body sprouted with English corn; and as the green corn grew, his own body melted away and was no more than clay, and all about him acre upon acre the corn grew. But he himself was gone. Harvesters came and cut the corn, which was so ripe some of the grains tumbled from the chaff. He had felt the hard ripe grains falling back upon the earth, which was himself. And they had threshed the corn and milled it at a mill and made bread. And thousands had come, rejoicing and eating the bread. Then everywhere—the length and breadth of New England—he had heard tambour and flute and fiddle, and laughing and rejoicing. White men and Indians danced together for joy, and angels came to join the merriment. There was delight in Heaven, even as upon earth. She saw he believed that this son of his would save the world. All he might have been—and was not—this son would be.

Idly, she would continue whatever work she had brought with her or let it fall in her lap. She had little to say, but she would always smile at him with sad affection. Her indifference was partly due to her wretched condition and partly

to her own certainty that the child would be but another Peter Fearing.

She got no pleasure, now, from her approaching motherhood. The unborn child . . . Peter. She thought of him in the likeness of the powerful obese old man of Boston: the bright, hard gaze, the silvery gauze of hair about a bald dome. The more her husband talked about her son, the more aged, the more eloquent, did the stranger within her body seem. She remembered the four months of serenity and secret delight she had known, and her plans for Ursula. Then sickness and weakness had followed. Yes, the child seemed something hostile to her blood and flesh. Sometimes, in September and October, she thought perhaps he had died, for she got a feeling of cold from where it rested and a chillness went up and down her legs and numbed her hands and feet.

Forethought was, after all, no closer to her. He spoke often to the woman—kindly enough, but in such a way she felt herself little more than the earth in a flower-pot, the husk on the grain, the common vessel filled with rare wine.

I4

IN December, when within a month the delivery might be expected, Goody Goad talked to her master. She advised summoning over from Concord an excellent woman, a Mistress Kendall.

"I am not the woman I once was, Mr. Fearing. No, nor the midwife either. My hands are too crippled with the rheumatics. Phoebe is diligent and I've taught her well, but she's too young and too nervous—and you know she is with child herself."

"Concord. Why stop at Concord? I'll ride to Boston myself

and bring back whoever is best bespoken there. No money, no pains, will be wasted in such a cause."

When he came back he looked confused. He had engaged a doctor to come out in two weeks and stay through the confinement.

So far as Jazan knew, she had never seen nor spoken to one of those wicked and God-forsaken folk who still wander about this earth in punishment of their crucifixion of Christ—the Jews. But neither had she ever heard of man-midwife. This creature, coming out from Boston to attend her, was both. He could not really be a doctor, in spite of the title he claimed. No doctor ever concerned himself with the travail of women. She questioned her husband closely.

He was called Doctor Soloman. He had come from Holland to New Amsterdam and from New Amsterdam to Boston, following curiosity only. But at Hartford he had delivered a woman said to be dying by cutting open her belly. True, the woman had died; but she would have died anyway—and the child was saved. He did not tell her that those who recommended Dr. Soloman said, although he was a man of the greatest learning, they did not know but his wisdom came from Satan, and surely it was better to die at the hands of the Lord's servants than to live by the skill of a Devil-worshipper. Yet they told him in Boston, if he was willing to trust his wife to such a man, there was no doubt but her body would be safer than at the hands of midwives. This decision of Forethought's caused much criticism. The man was a Jew, and he had interested himself in midwifery, which was beneath the dignity of a reputable doctor. And how could any woman be so lacking in natural modesty as to admit a strange man to her lying-in?

Jazan had expected some hideous old man with dirty white

beard and great hooked nose. Instead he was charming in an almost youthful way, although in his middle years. His beard was as black as his eyes, his manner courteous. True, he did have a great nose, and he spoke thick English, learned in Holland. Sometimes she could not understand his words. Then his face would flush and he would gesture helplessly with his long thin hands. "Midwife hands," as Phoebe enviously pointed out. Goody Goad before her rheumatics had twisted her extremities had had "midwife hands," but Phoebe was not so blessed. His eyes, when he let them off the leash, were animated and eloquent, but for the most part he preferred a dignified calm in both words and expression. This calm, Jazan saw, was only a manner with him. She liked to see it give way and the flush start under the olive skin, the eyes grow eloquent. He had neither wife nor child, he said, and only one mistress, *ars medica*.

It was only while explaining the beauties and secrets of this mistress, or when his poor English was misunderstood, that he became the vital personality she was conscious of. As the days wore on, she came to realize that man-midwife he might be; Jew he might be, and despised by all—but beyond all doubt he was a great man. He lived for but one thing, and that was the truth. With humble interest, he questioned Goody Goad for hours about local customs and native herbs. She told him how the Indians built hot fires in the wigwams of fever patients, and when the sick person was well sweated he was thrown into the cold river. And yet, she said, this method had some virtue in it, for if the patient did not die he was quite well again. Black hellebore was used as a purge for melancholy and white hellebore relieved pain. "Clown's woundwort"—he had never heard of this herb in Europe. All she told him he made note of, and was grateful for the samples she gave him.

A workman fell from the barn at Baileys' Acres. Dr. Soloman took great interest in setting the broken leg, which healed so well it was never shorter than the other.

The coming of the doctor gave strength to Jazan and a determination to do well in the matter before her. This was not so much to please her husband, whose whole happiness seemed to rest upon the coming of a son, nor for herself, although like most childless women she had often felt pangs of unfulfilment—but to justify the doctor in the eyes of those who doubted. So two weeks went on.

15

FOR hours the two men sat opposite each other at the kitchen table almost without speaking. Forethought's face was grey, his eyes like lead, his light hair dishevelled upon his bowed head. Gervase Blue looked hidden and grim. There were new lines in the slightly hollow cheeks. In his eyes—even after the three-day vigil these two had kept in curious partnership—there was a look of fierce life. No one, to see his face, would guess that the woman he had loved from childhood lay next to death. There was no pathos in that set face. But his weary hands spread out before him on the table—those strong hands, now empty and relaxed, seemed to symbolize all the heart-break and despair he had endured. The expression of his face he could control, but not that of his hands.

For three days, for three nights—could it be that they had sat thus so long, without eating or moving? So it seemed to Gervase, and yet he knew this was not so. He had ordered the men's work. He had gone about the fields and barns. He had been over to Orde's to talk with that timber merchant from Boston. Thrice every day he had eaten. But all those com-

mon duties of life had been a dream. The only actuality was in the hours he had sat thus, across the table from Mr. Fearing.

The moaning from Forethought's study, where a bed had been set up, was feebler now—sometimes ending in a catching cry. Phoebe, her face blotched and swollen with her weeping, her body heavy with her own child, came blindly into the kitchen to see if the oil of lilies the doctor had ordered was boiling upon the hearth.

"How is it going, Phoebe?"

"Oh, Master Gervase, it couldn't be going worse. And all these newfangled ideas he has! He won't use the bearing-stool, although I put a new serge skirt on it. He says babies are born in bed these days."

She stumbled out of the room, the pot of oil in her hand. Instantly the tired moaning rose to a scream. Forethought said irritably, "She should not cry out. Goody tells me that a woman in letting the air in to the infant thus, through her mouth, encourages it to rise upward."

A number of village women were gathered in the hall to be at hand in case of need. They took it ill that the Jewish doctor had admitted none of them to the lying-in but Goody and Phoebe only. Even these gossips had known enough not to linger in the kitchen where the two men sat. They passed by them silently and gathered together in the hall.

Again, the cry of anguish. Gervase sprang to his feet, his tell-tale hands thrust under his leathern jerkin.

"This cannot go on forever, Mr. Fearing."

"That seems to be the Lord's intent. We can do nothing—only pray."

"Then why don't you pray—if that may do her good."

"A man may pray but in his own mind, and the Lord will hear."

Gervase laughed; and Forethought wondered if he knew that, in fact, he could not pray—not for his wife. It was as if he, in turning her body over to the care of the Jewish doctor, had of his own volition damned her beyond the reach of God. For three days she and the Jew had been bound together. True, Phoebe had stood helplessly by, with the tears forever running down her thick cheeks, and Goody Goad had hardly left the young mistress's bedside. But it was Jazan and the infidel who had been together in spirit. Even at this dire time his jealousy rose. And he was jealous, too, of Gervase, who thought he had the right to share the husband's distress.

"We can guess how deeply God came to hate mankind after the fall of Adam that he permits such suffering at the coming of new life. Eve, the first sinner . . . it would seem God has never forgotten the evil that she did. 'Tis wholesome that such a lesson of God's wrath should be put before us now and then. 'In sorrow shalt thou bring forth. . . .'"

Gervase looked at him curiously. "If it were possible—if some way might be discovered to take away this 'sorrow' from women, do you think it should be alleviated?"

"I do not. God knows what is best. For women must suffer in their bodies, even go down into the Valley of Death, that the spirit of man may be born."

He believed that the soul of his son was being purified by the agony of the mother's body.

Gervase put on his wadmal coat, fur cap, and leathern hauling gloves. He had ordered the old, musty thatch upon the barns to be replaced with shingles. He must go out and see how Hosea and the Penny brothers were making out as carpenters. And poor Billy Bright . . . the boy's hands shook so he could hardly hold a hammer.

16

THERE was the light from the kitchen hearth and one candle burning upon the table. Very early in the morning of the fourth day the two men sat together in their curious intimacy. Outside the snow was falling, and so cold was it the timbers and floor-boards creaked. Impartially the candle threw its tiny beam on the distorted face of the clergyman and the grim features of the steward. The door opened, and the Amsterdam Jew stood bowing gravely before them. He had hardly left his patient's bedside for twenty-four hours. Forethought raised his stricken face.

"What news have you now, sir?"

"As you must have guessed. I fear for her life."

"And the child?"

"Doubtless it will die with her."

Forethought poured brandy from the bottle before him into a cup and drank it hastily.

"In Hartford, they say . . . you yourself told me. . . . Is there not a way a living child can be delivered from a dying woman?"

"Ah, that poor woman! She had been eight days in labour and was already moribund. True, I saved the child by my cutting—but the mother I slew."

Forethought's head was in his hands. The Jew went on, "I cannot do so in this case, for although I doubt the lives of both can be saved, I believe I can spare the mother."

"By destroying the child?"

"I think now 'tis the only way."

Gervase's hands clenched. "Then do so," he ordered.

Dr. Soloman bowed as though accepting the right of this

young servant to command him. Forethought raised his head.

"Wait. . . ." He seemed to have no breath to finish his sentence. His lips felt for words that did not come. Again the slight Oriental bow from the doctor. "I have had the most positive assurance that this child of mine shall become the greatest leader since the founding of the Colony. It is God's will the child be saved—Amen." Then unaccountably he began to weep. "Oh, Jazan, I loved you so . . . never will I forget—never. But God's will, not mine, be done!"

"Doctor, do not heed him!" commanded Gervase, now on his feet. "He is gone mad with worry. Believe me, this man loves his wife. If there is any way her life can be saved . . . If he were in his right mind, he would not hesitate. . . ."

"Yes," cried Forethought. "God knows I have loved my wife to my own humiliation and sorrow. This has been my sin. I see it all so clearly now. Get you gone, Doctor. You have my orders." He turned bitterly to his companion. "It is you she has always loved. That is why my child so poisons her she cannot bear it, as women bear children to men they love. . . . If it were your child . . ."

Gervase saw his chance. How could this man be so mad? How could he be so astute?

"Perhaps," he said boldly, "it is. You do not know!"

Both men were on their feet. Their voices were so soft none of the waiting neighbour-women in the hall could hear them. Forethought's face froze with horror, his mouth stupidly agape. A look of disbelief changed slowly to credulity—certainty. He thought back over a hundred things, his mind nimble. Jazan had been loath to tell him of her condition. Wasn't it last May he had seen her binding up a knife-cut in the steward's thumb? He had noticed the softness in her eyes. Had thought it but

compassion. It had been love. Somehow, he had always known. Nothing Hagar had said, nothing he had seen—but he had known. And now he saw the mockery of his great dreams. God promising to raise up a saviour to New England, begotten by a bastard servant upon the body of an adulterous wife! Behind what stone wall, under what hedge, in hayloft or sheepcote, bed or thicket—he would never know (yet situation after situation presented itself to his imagination). To this folly he had been led by believing that God would deign to speak clearly to a man whose mind had been muddled by sensual love of a woman.

His hands covered his tears. "Oh, God," he cried out, and he thought with loathing of Fenton's fur house, "you have punished me beyond my strength, beyond my deserts—God, let me die now!" Then turning to the doctor who still waited beside them, he said: "What matter of mine is this? Let them both die, accursed in their sin!"

Hatless, he flung himself into the snow-storm. He knew but one place to carry his unutterable anguish, his tears. Through the great flakes and cold, he ran like a wounded beast to his prayer-chamber.

The doctor stood watching Gervase. If this were true, much would be explained. *Ars medica*, his beloved mistress, had often shown him strange conduct.

Gervase walked across hall and entry and he came into Forethought Fearing's study, where the woman lay upon a bed. The room was insufferably hot, for it had not only the fireplace to heat it but charcoal braziers as well. He could smell the medicinal herbs. Basil, dittany, and horehound would hasten travail. Bedstraw stays the blood. Borage and pennyroyal to cheer the heart. And a smell of hot flannels

and wine. And even now he smelled the bindings of the Fear-ing library upon its shelves.

And all that was left of Jazan was that pointed white face upon a blue pillow-bear; that black hair tossed about; those great eyes—dark and seemingly sightless. Without a word to Phoebe or Goody Goad, and heedless of the doctor who followed him, he knelt beside the bed and put his arms about the woman's shoulders and his face against the tangle of her hair.

"Jazan," he said. For hours now she had lain with open eyes but had seemed to see nothing, and her ears too seemed sealed. The labour throes had ceased.

"Jazan." Now she moved slightly—the thin lids fluttered. "Do you remember one day . . . it was long ago, and spring-time, and I had but just come to Paradise . . . and you and I went together to the lambing shed? An old ewe had twin lambs." He laid his hand upon her forehead. His simple words, so without meaning to the dire situation, followed one after another, softly: "And Goodman Goad gave one lamb to you and one to me. And never could we tell our lambs apart. . . ." She was smiling slightly, as though his tale re-created something beautiful and spring-like and long ago. Her nostrils moved, smelling again the sweet fragrance of lambs and May. "Do you remember, Jazan?"

She had neither spoken nor answered questions for over a day. Her voice was low but sensible. "Yes, I remember the lambs. . . ." And obviously she wished him to tell more, that she might, by the memory of her spring-time, draw the strength for the dark hour of her womanhood.

"You must have courage, now, Jazan, and try once more to be delivered of your child. I promise you I will always love

and cherish her, as I have loved and cherished you. She shall be daughter to me, as well as mistress."

Her dark eyes widened. He smoothed the pillow, kissed her hand and forehead. "Be of good heart," he said.

Goody Goad and Phoebe both stood with their backs turned—Phoebe wiping her tears away with her apron. This moment was too holy to desecrate with idle eyes. Their ears they could not control, but each in her own heart swore that no one would ever hear from them what it was the servant had said to his mistress as she lay dying. Only the Jewish doctor watched, with bright, inhuman scrutiny. This talk about lambs—it amazed him. And yet he saw it had worked where his draughts had not. Down into death had she been sinking . . . and now she was up again and ready to fight.

Gervase went back to the kitchen, where now he sat alone. He was very tired.

At last, close upon dawning, Phoebe came blundering in, convulsed with sobs and inappropriate laughter. The child had been born—and the woman lived. At the same moment, the kitchen door opened. Forethought entered, the snow-flakes falling from his black cloak. Phoebe ran to him.

"Oh, sir, 'tis not the son you looked for, sir—but 'tis a daughter. And doctor says Mistress will live." And she burst into tears.

Forethought did not seem to hear her words. He walked to where Gervase sat, head in hands. "It was a lie you told to me," he said, "was it not? In God's name, I demand . . ."

Gervase lifted his aching eyes. "It was a lie."

Forethought's pale face was pinched and pulled awry. He moistened his lips quickly. The next words were hard to say: "It was well told. I . . . I thank you. It was well done. I can never explain how it was—what came over me. . . . I

believe, for a moment—I was outside my faculties.” And he had the decency to put out his hand to the man he hated, and Gervase took it.

And then from the West Chamber came a weak, snarling, animal cry. Both men turned their heads and listened.

17

“JANUARY 14, 1675: A very extraordinary Storm by Reason of the falling and driving of the Snow. Few Women could get to Meeting. Between 3 and 4 p.m. I Baptized my Daughter whom I named Isobel (’Twas my Mother’s name). Goodwife G. as Midwife carried her from the pew on the Bearing-Cloth, Sister Fayrweather sent out. Child did not shrink the water (although I broke the ice in the Christening Bowl) but Cried out lustily. So home to drink the groaning ale.”

He laid down his pen and went to the hearth to warm his numb fingers. Again that wailing from the cradle in the warm hall. From the hour of her birth Isobel had lamentably complained that ever she had been born. It was as if she already knew this naughty world and resented that she had been forced into it. It was not in sickness she cried, but in vehement protest against life! “I like not this world—I did not ask to come. . . .” So her father interpreted her lusty complaining. Could it be that already she foresaw the heart-break, the despair, the sickness and sorrow of mortal man? Already knew how old age would creep upon her? Death swallow up her body?

The wails lessened and became jerky. He guessed Jazan now sat by the cradle, rocking it with her foot. Under her breath she would be singing of Lady Isobel and the Elfin Knight. He went back to his diary.

“In five days only believe the Infant hath Gained more knowledge of this Vale of Tears than many an Ancient. She crieth out against it, yet Goodwife G. says she is a healthy child. God bless to her her Sorrows.”

LATE June. The whip-poor-wills lashed the darkness with their fury—*whip* poor will, *whip* poor will, *whip* poor will! And close and far away sang the mosquitoes. Isobel, now five months old, had complained so bitterly (and her father as well) that Jazan had taken the baby from her cradle beside the bed and carried her into the hall. Here she had sat much of the night, with the baby, who was breeding teeth, in her arms. She rubbed the swollen gums with the paste of hares' brains, butter, and honey Goody Goad recommended.

Whip-poor-wills, the haunting hoot of an owl, mosquitoes, the solemn tock of the clock above her head, the tired wail of the baby. But worst of all had been the howling from Swamp Town. Actually, a mosquito on the cheek is louder than a hundred savages a mile away—but not to Jazan. Not for years had the Tawnies set up sufficient din to carry this far. And why-for did they tonight? She feared their din, and the whip-poor-wills made it even harder to bear. She thought how Indians habitually signal among themselves by the note of the whip-poor-will, it is so easily imitated by man. And the bob-white they could imitate. Owls, they could do—but not so well.

It was a relief when at last the day began to break and she saw a brown bird, squatting on a stone, whipping the silence with its eerie cry. Half she had expected to see an Indian—and not the friendly Indians she had known all her life.

She took from her baby's head the heavily padded biggin it wore to protect it from falls. She stroked the curly white hair that grew like lamb's-wool upon the little head. Isobel

was thin and puny, and in no way pretty. "Lambkin," her mother called her. As she gazed down on the poor little creature now asleep in her tired arms, her heart smote her. She wanted to apologize to Lambkin that ever she had been born.

A "love-child" comes into this world with beauty and charm to kindle love in others. But what of Isobel? Must she suffer because of her parents' disharmony? She clutched the baby with a passion of dread and love.

"I will make it up to you, my Lambkin," she whispered into the woolly pate. But what she meant by these words, she did not know.

Forethought had been patient and loving to this little daughter who had been such a grievous disappointment to him. No—polite rather than loving. Always polite.

When at last Forethought sat down to breakfast beside his wife, he spoke impatiently of the din the Indians had made. And yesterday it had been reported to him that many strangers were with them. Jazan could not tell him her own fears. She sat with the baby in her lap. Thin though Isobel might be, she was a valiant feeder, and everything agreed with her. She might not like this cruel world, but she had a strong will to survive. Jazan offered her a spoonful of brown bread soaked in ale, and the baby, with a frown of concentration, greedily sucked it up and screamed for more. Jazan absent-mindedly told her husband how often in the past the Indians had howled and danced. Perhaps they were preparing their young men for a game-drive. Or they made magic over the new-sprouted corn. Or it was to the dead they sang—and what of that?

Forethought was angry. He never could see why it was Totonic and his people so eschewed the Christian faith.

In spite of her reassuring words, Jazan did know something was amiss, and she passed the morning waiting—but she did

not know for what. Forethought was gone away, either to confer with Colonel Coffin or to find solace in his prayer-chamber.

Towards noon she heard a frenzied barking in the yard, and Fenton's voice calling the dogs by name. It rang out as in the old days: "Get down, Tiger . . . Gone-away! Hey, Spot! Hey, Remmy! No, I'll not take you a-hunting with me." She put her baby in its wooden cradle and ran to meet him as he swung off his jaded horse. Teeth and eyes were flashing. He came into the dark house like sunshine or west wind or strong drink.

"What news, Fenton?"

"News enough—but ale, first."

She sent the wondering Phoebe to the cellar for it and followed him into the hall. He drank greedily and wiped his mouth upon his forearm. She saw his shirt was stained with sweat. Not for years had she seen him thus. He looked reckless, handsome, tired, and dirty.

"We are at war, Jazan."

"Not the French?"

"Closer to hand, and under foot. King Philip of the Wampanoags has risen up—as many have thought he would. He has wiped out Swanzey. Boston has sent four companies to support the Plymouth Colony, and Connecticut has promised her share. I hope it will be no great matter, but . . . Perhaps, if we can get rid of Philip quickly, it will not spread to general conflagration."

"What do you mean?"

"The inevitable conflict."

She saw, then, that underneath the brightness of his exterior he was weary. As if answering the question in her eyes, he went on:

"My clothes have not been off for a three-day. Most of

that time I have sat in council with the Governor and the War Committee. I left Boston at a gallop, and I have changed my horse three times."

"Why did they not send you with the troops to Plymouth?"

"Because I am to parley with the Nipmucs—to persuade them to at least remain neutral in this matter. I hope by the time I reach them, they will already have heard of King Philip's death."

"Do the Nipmuc sachems know you are coming?"

"We sent Indian runners to Sagamore John and Sam of the Nashaways and Monoco—I know them all right well."

"But do you go alone? Oh, Fenton. . . ."

"Totonc will go with me. That's why I came here first."

"Perhaps he will not. Last night Swamp Town was rejoicing."

"He will go. Now, you send to Swamp Town for him. And tell a man to take my saddle from the spent horse and put it on Tobey." He stretched and yawned. "Until Totonc comes I sleep here on the settle, and no one is to disturb me. Then I start on for Lancaster."

2

JAZAN herself went to Swamp Town, carrying, as she always did, presents for her friends. She knew immediately the Indians had had news of Philip's uprising before it had come to the Canaanites. She met an unfriendly quiet. The children did not come to her as usual. Wigwams were being taken down. The women were packing sacks with hunting gear. There was the salt for preserving meat, and nets and spears for catching it. Always, at this time of year, the Indians went north to less civilized country for a game-drive. Surely they would not ex-

pect to kill white men in nets nor slay them with spears nor salt their flesh . . . Totonic is sly . . . he is taking away his young men before war breaks over us.

She saw the embers still smouldering from the great fires of the night before, and the earth beaten by dancers' feet. Not getting much welcome made her realize, almost for the first time, how far apart was her life and the life of her neighbours. She went to Totonic. Flying Stone, that jeering older brother of Totonic's, pushed past her insolently as she entered the hut, and made a savage remark at her in Algonquin. But who was Flying Stone? He was nobody. Totonic was sitting with Johnny and the stony-eyed Mercy beside him. Six months before Johnny—who, after a whipping, had been indentured as servant to a strict matron of Rowley—had returned to Swamp Town. Either no one knew she was there, or they did not care. Totonic got up with courtesy, and her strangeness fell away a little. But he looked dazed, as though he did not quite know what was happening. Yes, he would go instantly to Fenton Parre. So, half naked as he was and leading the way, they walked back to Paradise.

Tobey was already saddled by the kitchen door. Now the servants were standing about him, staring at him as though he was something unfamiliar to them. They were whispering together.

Jazan questioned Totonic gently about the great to do of the night before. He looked her straight in the eye, and she noticed that he had an honest eye, not of the reptilian blackness of many of the Indians but a soft reddish-brown, like a spaniel's.

"Tomorrow we go to drive the deer, as our fathers taught us, a hundred miles to the north."

"Does Flying Stone go too?"

"Yes, of course. But the women and children and the old, they bide here."

"Were there not many strange Indians with you at Swamp Town?"

"Not many, Jazan—a few only."

"And you are gone for long?"

"Until we have caught our meat."

Fenton was asleep on the narrow settle in the hall. His body, graceful and subtle in waking, was now sprawled out like a carcass. The sound of feet awoke him, and he was quickly wide awake.

"Fetch food for us both, Sister—do it yourself for me. And mind the door of the hall is kept closed."

Jazan was glad that she was admitted to their company, if only as a silent servant. Even at a time like this, Fenton did not fling himself into the matter at hand as most white men would. He saw that his guest was fed and had drunk his fill of ale. He lighted a pipe and handed it to him, then quietly began to talk.

"The Governors of Plymouth, Connecticut, and the Bay Colony have laid a duty upon me." Totonic said nothing but watched his friend's face. "I am to carry word of friendship to Moon Goes' uncle, Sagamore John, and all the lesser Nipmuc sachems and warriors. They will meet me day after next at a great parley at Lancaster. Totonic—have you been sent for?"

"Yes, Fenton," Totonic said.

"And soon you set forth?"

"I do not. My braves and I go north, as always at this season, to drive the game."

"No, no, Totonic. Await your hunting. The deer will not vanish." The Indian said nothing. "I want you to ride with

me to Lancaster. Doubtless you have heard the news? In Plymouth Colony, King Philip has made open war." The Indian nodded. "He and his Wampanoags will, within a day or two, be blotted from this earth. You have seen the smallpox, Totonic—how the one gets it and then the next, till all are slain or seared? It is my duty to see that the plague King Philip has let loose does not spread to the Nipmucs, who are my children and my brothers—whom I have always loved. Let the one tribe—the Wampanoags—die; not the whole people."

"Think you," asked Totonic cautiously, "King Philip will be quickly taken and slain?"

"When I left Boston he had been driven out of his Mount Hope and cornered in a swamp at Pocasset. Unless there is grave error, he is dead by now."

"Grave error there well may be, Fenton, for all three of the Colonies are so jealous of each other."

"Not so jealous, however, as you Indian tribes. Now, Totonic, it was my choice to go to Sagamore John without any escort, but with you only. You understand how witless it would be for the Nipmucs to join with Philip. Things are not as they were in your father's day. Then, the Indians outnumbered us ten to one. Now, it is probable that there are more of us of fighting age than of you. And if war it is, we will fight this out to the last man. Your women and children will be sold as slaves. It may start as a war, Totonic, but it will end as a massacre. Don't you know that the white men thirst for the Indian lands? Half the English folk will welcome a chance to clear the Colony of what they call 'vermin.' Totonic, you must go with me. It is for the good of your own people. And what I say limply in the Algonquin tongue, you shall say with eloquence and fire. They will listen to you."

"But who am I? The least of the sachems and they scorn

me, my wilder brothers—for that I and my people have for long bowed to the English yoke. Me, they will not respect.”

But Fenton knew that Totonic was honoured among his own people, in spite of his small size. It would give great weight to his mission if he could appear before the conference with Totonic already won to the English side.

“You will ride with me? I will have another horse saddled.”

“Nay. I go north with the hunters.”

“Oh, a pox on you and your hunters!”

“You have spoken. Now I will speak, Fenton Parre. Do not go to the parley. There is nothing you can say, and you will surely die.”

“Have the Nipmucs already decided to join with Philip?”

“There are many evil birds abroad, and they sing ill songs. I bid you not to go.”

“You bid me go against my duties as a soldier and the ambassador of three great Colonies?”

“I bid you—against all these things.”

Jazan, who had been sitting quietly beside the baby’s cradle, noticed that up to this time Totonic’s face had been like stone and he had spoken with great dignity. Now he faltered. His eyes were lowered, and he bit his lip.

“Fenton, you are my brother. Go on the game-drive with us. And then, when it is all over, we will come back again.”

“So it is in truth a game-drive you go upon, and not upon the war-path?”

“Flying Stone tried to persuade the young men otherwise, but last night it was decided. All the young men will go north with me—and you too, Fenton Parre. There is nothing you can say at Lancaster. It all rests upon one thing.”

“The capture of Philip?”

"If he escape, I believe the Nipmucs will take up the hatchet. If he is taken, they will be for peace."

"And you will not go with me?"

"I cannot."

"So I will go to them alone—nor am I afraid, especially."

For a while they argued and at last parted in some anger, Fenton accusing Totonic of being no friend of the English, and Totonic throwing up against the white man one injustice after another.

Fenton could not defend the actions of Colonel Coffin and Mr. Fearing in dealing with the Indians. Yet he answered Totonic shortly and without much kindness, so the parting of these two friends was trivial and bad tempered.

3

FENTON was bitterly disappointed that Totonic had refused to go with him, and he was not sure whether the preparations at Swamp Town were honestly for a game-drive or a war-party. Of his personal safety he had but little fear. True, to the north among the fierce Tarratines, to the west among the Mohawks, he had met hostility—but never among the peaceful Nipmucs. They were not a warrior race and had often been in subjugation to their more violent neighbours. He confidently believed that his prestige was greater among them than King Philip's. Nor did Totonic's mournful words impress him much. The Indians were always hearing "evil birds sing ill songs." It seemed to him that at heart they were rather timid folk. But one thing Totonic said was true. If King Philip had been allowed to get out of his swampy lair at Pocasset, his mission would be arduous.

Tobey kept to at a quick single-pace. As the Bay Path came

into Marlborough, Totonic slid out of the woods so silently Fenton did not see him until the horse leaped in surprise. He had come on foot through secret forest trails that pierced the green, dark forest. Their greeting was monosyllabic, but Fenton stopped at the ordinary and hired a horse for his companion. So they rode west.

They rode the one before the other (for the path was narrow) in wordless silence and without reference to their recent disagreement. That night they camped by the long, bright Lake Quinsigamond. Blue hills were about them when they woke at sunrise, and the air full of birds' songs. But Totonic had lain all night with his head upon his bullet sack. Fenton knew he had not slept much and did not refuse him the long pull at the leathern bottle of rum he demanded. This desire for drink had been growing on his milk-brother. He thought, pityingly, how little pleasure the red men got from this great gift of God. He had never seen an Indian happier for his drinking. They grew sullen and vicious, lachrymose and childish—never mellow and loving, like Englishmen.

While they were saddling their hobbled horses and eating the jerked beef and journey cakes, Totonic spoke.

"Do you think Captain Henchman and only one hundred men could surround the great Pocasset Swamp and take Philip?"

"Why, no. But there are five companies of Englishmen—not one hundred men."

"There are one hundred men. The others have gone off to the Narragansett lands."

Fenton silenced him with a "You know not what you say."

For years, both Connecticut and the Bay had coveted the lands of the Narragansett Indians—who were old enemies of the Wampanoags and friendly towards the white men. What

did this invasion mean? What could it mean but that, at the most crucial moment of the young war, they had let their cupidity get the better of them? They had marched into the Narragansett country, probably to pick a quarrel with that tribe, and left the capture of Philip—upon which so much depended—to an inadequate force of one hundred men. He knew that great bushy swamp at Pocasset. How could so small a force hold it against Philip and his warriors? As Christ lives! Could they not realize their own danger?

A few white settlers lived at Quinsigamond, at the north end of the sparkling lake. The path led through their scattered huts and poor fields, which still were studded with charred stumps. Men and women were up and at work. They would have stopped the riders, although one was but an Indian and the other a roughly dressed fellow, who for all they could see might be no better. They were hungry for news. But the news Fenton had he did not wish to tell them, for he doubted if word yet had come to them of the trouble with King Philip. So he rode on. "And God pity you," he said to himself, "if my mission fails me."

He saw a young girl, bare-footed, among the stumps. She was a wild thing, with defiant black eyes. To her he would have spoken, but she regarded him with fear. Her eyes were like the pistols of a highwayman, holding him up. He saw her pupils dilate. She jumped back into the bushes, giving a short cry. At that cry, children sprang up from everywhere and made for the distant house. When she saw they were safe, the ragged protectress bounded after them like a deer. A sister? A young servant? He thought idly of her and how her eyes had held him up, so shining and hostile. He thought of his own wild youth about Canaan and Swamp Town. What a child she and he might have between them! And he felt an idle desire for this

child, he had never felt for the two little boys Star had borne him. Star's children . . . with their groaning-cakes and their groaning-beer, their bibs and biggins, their bearing-clothes, bearing-blankets, god-parents, diapers, and what not. He felt a wistful regret for his own childhood—which no child of his was likely to repeat.

The day-time blackness of the fir forest swallowed the riders, and they turned north a little to Lancaster. The pathway tunnelled the great tree growth. Now they crossed a brook, now a fallen tree. Sometimes they came out into a natural meadow, with wild hay rushing rankly up out of wet black earth. Red-wings whistled and quivered.

The two men said little to each other, but Totonic asked if Fenton had his jews' harp with him. This, Fenton had thought to slip into his pocket. He took it out, let the reins fall on Tobey's neck, and buzzed upon it with a will. "Troy Town" and "Phyllida Flouts Me," he played. And then "Troy Town" over and over, for Totonic liked it best.

At nightfall they came to Lancaster, a pretty village of fifty houses. It stood in the midst of its meadows and already had an air of order about it. Why, there was not one house fit to serve as blockhouse if the Indians came. He rode up to the biggest house and asked to be accommodated for the night. It was the clergyman's, a Mr. Rowlandson. His wife courteously asked him to share their supper and take a bed with one of her boys; but when he asked what they could do for his companion, she pursed her lips. Let the savage sleep in the barn. Fenton demurred. Totonic was to sleep wherever he did.

"But the Indians have vermin. . . ."

"Ay," said Fenton. "And this sachem and I have shared fortunes and vermin for thirty years."

In the end both travellers slept in the barn. But the house-

wife sent out an excellent supper to them, and they were given grain as well as pasturage for the two horses.

It was Fenton's turn to sleep badly. If Philip should escape and spread his contagion. . . . He and his tribe were weak and little thought of, but he well might be the flash to start the tinder. Totonic was right. The Indians were hemmed in and dammed up by the encroaching white men, and no longer were their chief men treated with respect by the authorities. For long they had been harbouring resentment against the neighbours they had at first generously welcomed. What had been the result of the coming of the white men? Just as Totonic had said: fines they could not pay were imposed and their lands seized; they were forced to serve in the fields, attend Sabbath services they could not understand. The Indians were now-a-days dependent upon their fire-arms to get food; game was too scarce for bow and arrow; but every now and then, suddenly and without due trial, their muskets were taken from them and distributed among the white men. They had been miserably put upon. They knew it and Fenton knew it. White men and Indians could not go on living together, and very little would it take to drench the country-side in a sea of blood.

Those folk killed at Swanzezy . . . flayed alive, mangled, and dismembered. It would be a ghoulish war. And he thought with pity of the young girl of Quinsigamond, and her covey. It was such as they would suffer most. Before this night he had thought of the possible war mostly in his own terms. There was something savage in him, and he had so long been bored with his merchant life he had welcomed the adventure. But now, so far from Boston, he saw the truth of the matter. Downy heads cleft with hatchets, the hair and skin of women pulled from the living flesh. And this Lancaster . . . what possible protection was there here? Now, since Totonic had told him that the

bulk of the troops had so foolishly been sent into Narragansett, he had even less confidence in the military ability of the three Colonies. Were they already beginning to look for spoils?

And Governor Leverett. . . . He had been a good and gallant officer long ago in Cromwell's army; but Fenton, sitting in council with the leaders, saw that the Governor's previous military training would be a hindrance rather than a help in this warfare. Actually, the Boston troops who had marched south so gallantly with such a rattle of drums, to join Plymouth, had carried clumsy pikes, which might have been good enough for Marston Moors (it sounded like a treeless spot) but would merely encumber a man in the bushy growths of Pocasset or the virgin forests of Narragansett. Who but a fool would think of chasing Indians with pikes? And it had been ridiculous to agree that the senior officers of whichever Colony the fighting took place in should have control. There was much doubt where these boundaries might be, and he saw how often the troops would not know where they were or who was their commanding officer. He had told Totonic confidently that the Englishmen now outnumbered the red men in New England, but no one really knew how many there were of either race. It was guessed there were fifty thousand white people, of all ages and both sexes. And he had said he supposed there were an equal number of Indians. Nobody knew.

One thing was certain. This war would not be fought by neat ranks of soldiers rattling their drums and piping their fifes, their long pikes on their shoulders, drawn up in military array; but every lonely farm-house would be a fort. Girls, like she of the Quinsigamond, would fight with an axe. This was to be in no way like the battles of Naseby and Marston Moors. Yet it was of such victories they talked—the old men of Boston.

In the morning he took from his pack his major's uniform.

This he had brought with him to impress the Indians. With its scarlet and gold that a bright eye could see for a mile, and boots so heavy as to be cumbersome once he was off his horse, nothing less fitted for actual fighting could be devised. Yet it would be in some such way Massachusetts would dress her soldiers—if she had the time and money. Luckily, he thought, she had neither; and her soldiers would be forced to go forth in wadmal, leather, and coarse hempen stuffs, already blurred by work in the fields. But for this occasion the showiness of his gear had advantages. The Indians themselves would be in their best paint and it behoved him to be as courteous.

Mrs. Rowlandson came to invite them to join her family at breakfast. She was amazed at the transformation. She had seen a rough, hatless fellow, probably some worthless fur trader, in dirty shirt and old breeches. Now there stood a major in uniform—great boots, sword, and all. Totonic, too, was well washed. Most of his clothing he had laid aside for so formal an occasion, and the silken beauty of his delicate body was enhanced by strings of wampum and other bits of childish folly. He had put slashes of paint upon his face: red, black, and white. Fenton knew what these colours meant: black for vengeance, white for mourning for those who must die, and red for blood. Mrs. Rowlandson had not the wit to read these threatening symbols. She was only interested to know that, although a savage and no Christian, he knew his Catechism. She led them into the house, where her husband officiated at morning prayers. After prayers was breakfast. But Totonic, in his official dress, frightened the children.

Joseph, a boy of fourteen, and his little sisters, Mary and Sarah. Sarah, in particular, wept and clung to her mother, begging, "Take him away! Take him away!" She kept her lovely yellow head in her mother's lap, but whenever she raised it she

glanced with horror at their painted guest. "He is bad, Mamma—take him away."

At least the children, thought Fenton, have the instinct of young animals. They know their danger. To their innocent eyes, the menace of that paint is clear to read. He had never before seen a child fear Totonic.

He found a few moments' time to talk alone with the Reverend Mr. Rowlandson, and him did he tell of the danger. And he asked him to select one house, probably the one they were now in, and fortify it as best they were able, for soon they might be attacked.

"But you say, sir, this may all come to nothing. Will you not return through Lancaster anyway—whether successful or not in your mission?"

"If I am successful I will return. If I fail . . . likely I will never return—although you may see my head upon a pole."

"You are a brave man to take so great a risk. Sir, permit me to bless you before you ride forth."

Fenton called to Totonic, "Come here, Brother, and we will be blessed together."

This was not as Mr. Rowlandson had designed, but with as good grace as might be he blessed the two young men. Soon they got upon their horses and rode away, expecting at any moment to be picked up by some Indian guide who would lead them to the council-place. When they had gone a mile or more along the river bank, such a one suddenly rose up before them. He was in full war-paint, his hair shorn away except for the scalp-lock. He said the council was not to be by the Nashaway as the white men had commanded, but south again and then west—at Quabog. Fenton nonchalantly agreed to this, although he did not take it as a good omen that the Indians wished their parley so far into their own wilderness. He bade the guide get

up behind Totonic and ride with them. The warrior surlily refused, and without disturbing a leaf he slipped into the forest.

Some two years before, a handful of Ipswich men had been permitted to settle on the Quabog River. This was the furthestmost settlement of the English until one came to the Connecticut River towns. The crude village of huts was passed, and they followed an Indian trail for some hours. This trail was so obscure that even Fenton, without Totonic, would surely have been lost, but at last they joined the Quabog River again. Here were broad meadows, planted and cared for by generations of Indians. The river coiled and sparkled in the noonday sun. Occasionally an elm flowed up out of the rich red soil like a fountain of green, the long trailing branches limp in the hot air.

Everywhere they found traces of Indians: their footprints, their fire-holes, rotted huts, bones. Some of these traces were fresh as that morning. Others might be very old. Fenton saw the carcass of a horse which he supposed to have been stolen before it had been killed and eaten. He guessed by the careless way they had left the remains in full sight how boldly they looked upon this land as their own. Usually they hid the bodies of the beasts they stole. Now here it lay, putrid in the sun, for any man who dared to question.

Sitting quietly under an elm, with new flint-locks in their hands, was a party of four Indians waiting for them. These were good guns they held. Fenton knew that the Indians often had better ones than the white farmers. Even the picked troops who had marched out of Boston had many old matchlocks among them. . . . How would this matter end?

The official escort for the white ambassador greeted Fenton courteously, but to Totonic they seemed cold, in spite of the fierce paint upon his face. It was as if they held him a traitor

because of the company he rode in. So they came off the rolling hills the trail had clung to and down into broad green meadows.

4

IT was the greatest gathering of Indians either had ever seen. Hundreds of huts covered with bark and skins and woven matting. Probably a thousand people—say three hundred warriors, for many of the old and over-young and the women might have been left behind. Three hundred fighting men—and Fenton, the one white man. He felt strength springing up through him from his loins. He was filled with the power of his manhood, his fierce English blood. The muscles hardened on his arms and thighs.

A council-house had been built of green branches, a pretty thing, as though for a girl's holiday; but Fenton saw stacked muskets, great drums, war-paint on hostile faces. The squaws and children shrieked imprecations and ridicule upon him, for they were not trained to the official silent courtesy of the men. Many followed him and his escort. From their words he gathered that some among them had never seen a white face before, yet there was probably not a one of them who had not been born since the founding of Boston, or at least Plymouth. From as far as that they have come! Well, we shall have a big war. . . . And he bade his escort take him straight to Moon Goes' uncle, Sagamore John.

He had no doubt about the hostility of the people, but the old Sagamore—whom he had often traded with and had known for years—greeted him genially and without sinister formality. However, for his small nephew by marriage he had scant courtesy. On the morrow, early in the morning, he said, would be

the great council. In the meantime Fenton Parre was to sleep in one of his own huts.

"Some of these people," he said, pointing contemptuously at the staring faces about him, "have never seen a white man, such savages as they are. Will you not keep within your hut? Otherwise their curiosity may be an offence to you, my guest."

Fenton would have risked this "curiosity," and would have liked to estimate the number of warriors, learn what tribes of Nipmucs there might be here. He had already noted Nashaways, Quabogs, Wachusetts, Chaubunagungamaugs. He might even pick up some friends among them. But old John's words were a command. He said farewell to Totonic and went to the hut. A guard from Sagamore John's own household was set about, both to keep him in and to keep others out.

That night, for miles about, the air was split open with the shrieks and whoops of the savages, and the drums (which they had learned of from the white men) began to beat. Once he heard the scream of a dying horse. He clenched his teeth in anger that not only would the Indians kill and eat these creatures, sacred to his own race, but never could—or would—kill them with one clean blow, as an Englishman kills beef. Through the chinks in his hut he could see great fires burning, naked men dancing in hellish light.

"Tobey," he thought, "if I brought you from the green fields of Paradise for these pigs to swill . . ." But he knew that by the next night it might be he that roasted in their fire.

In his dream the crying of the slain horse came to him again, but this time it was from the lips of the wild girl of Quinsigamond—who was resisting his own violence. He awoke and felt ashamed that he could dream so vilely. If the war came, the white women at least need have no fear of rape, for this was a crime of his own more sensual and civilized race. The red men

had known nothing of it until the coming of the white man.

Now, outside, the din was horrible—like some gigantic demon cat fight. "But our psalm singing in meeting is no more lovely," he thought. Perhaps the two races were more even than the good people in Boston believed. The white race did not eat horses, but they did violate women. They did not shriek like devil-cats for a night or two before they could make up their minds, but they neighed like horses when they worshipped their Maker. He slept again.

He woke to find Sagamore John himself, dressed with magnificence and followed by two squaws, standing by his mat. The old chief's face was like mud caked and broken in the sun. He gestured to the two women to set down their pots of samp and boiled flesh, and slowly and in silence the two began to eat. Fenton hoped that this was not his good friend Tobey that he ate of. It was a great honour that the old chief had chosen to breakfast with him, and Fenton accepted the courtesy as gravely as it was given. He limited himself to one question. What of his horse and Totonic?

The Sagamore's own wife was tending to the horse, but as for Totonic . . .

"What, then, of Totonic?"

"He was bidden to come to this conference and to bring with him all his young men. True, he came—but he came alone."

Fenton knew too much of Indian discipline to take this breach seriously. The warriors disobeyed the sachems, the sachems the sagamores. So it had always been among them. And any quarrelsome fellow that wished might get up a war-party, and no one was forced to go and no one could forbid his going—except the wife only.

He wiped his mouth and said that he was ready. John lifted the mat over the doorway and, with Fenton following, stepped

out into the milling mass of Indians—men, women, children, and dogs. But a lane was made for them and they came to the pretty maiden's bower he had noted the night before.

Twenty of the chief men were already within, sitting quietly upon straw mats, looking about them with bright snake eyes. One after another Fenton recognized and greeted, and they answered him. Then he noticed beside the place where John would sit a strange crude face. At first he thought him to be an old man, so heavily marked and worn was his face. Yet instinctively, he knew he was young. The eyes were dull beneath their hooded lids. Who was this stranger, treated with such respect? He looked quickly at his hands, but they were hidden in his pelage belt. He had never seen King Philip, for his dealings with Indians were with those away from the seaboard and from white men. If Fenton could see his hands he would know. Philip's right hand was maimed.

Fenton took the seat assigned to him and gazed idly at the leafy bower. Outside, great masses of people had gathered to hear and watch. He heard the rustle of the dried leaves as they pushed against the frail walls. His eyes went towards the low roof.

Seven poles had been set in a row, but he had thought they were part of the construction. Now, he looked to the top of these poles. Each was crowned with a severed head. These were the heads of white people. The Indians were watching him, hoping to see him turn colour at this ghastly sight, but he steeled himself to look these trophies over. Doubtless Philip had sent them to his wished-for allies. The Nipmucs could not have already taken them. They came from Swanzey or Taunton. The purple swollen lips, the yellow teeth, the sunken dead eyes gazed down at him. One was the head of a woman. Her long grey hair hung down for a yard about her, clotted with

gore. One was the head of a bald man. But the next head . . . why, it could not be . . . Cluff the Bear. It was the head of Cluff the Bear.

Cluff's face had an expression of surprise and macabre delight, as though he was glad to see his old crony and expected that he would be able to rescue him from the Indians, from death itself. Or perhaps you think I've come to join you, Cluff. Well, never more would he drink his fill and pinch the wenches and dance the bear dance!

He would have preferred to stand upon his feet, but he must sit patiently and let the Indians parley in time-honoured manner. Totonc came in and sat opposite him. Now there were thirty within the bower and perhaps a thousand outside. A pipe was lighted. Sagamore John was the first to smoke, and he handed it to Fenton, who sat upon his left hand. So it went silently about the circle and came last to the malignant-looking stranger on John's right. This Indian, who had kept his hands hid away in his pelage belt, gave Fenton an evil, triumphant look and stretched out a burned and crippled right hand and took the pipe.

So that is who *you* are!

But the absolute knowledge that King Philip had escaped the poorly supported Captain Henschman, had already had time to have his say with the Nipmucs, was more shocking than even the heads upon the poles.

Sagamore John began to speak.

"My children, the English have sent a messenger to confer with us. They have honoured us by sending one of their greatest men and one well known to many of you. For he has slept in our huts, eaten our food, hunted by our sides; and he speaks our language. Now we are breaking the chain of friendship which, from our fathers' time, has bound us to the English.

And this man is the last link in the chain. There is no need to tell him how we stand on this matter of war and peace. Let those heads of his English friends tell him—they know. We have taken up the hatchet.” He fumbled in his clothing and drew out an ancient stone hatchet, and it was daubed with red paint. “And the hatchet is red!” He flung it down at Fenton’s feet.

If Fenton had reached down and picked up the hatchet, then he would have accepted the state of war. So they had not waited for his coming. His mission was all but lost—his life, as well. But he had confidence in his own luck. Another pipe was filled and leisurely went round the circle. He must make an answer, but an immediate answer would have been unmannerly, and if other Indians wished to speak he must give them time. All eyes turned to Philip. This one had nothing to say but sat huddled in his blankets as though he had a chill, although it was a summer’s day. At last the Sagamore spoke again.

“Fenton Parre, for your father’s sake and for your own sake—and the goodness you have both often showed to my people—I wish that it was not now you who are the last link we must break in the chain that binds us to the white men. But what is, is.”

Fenton saw he was condemned to die, and now he got to his feet. Once more on his legs, he felt powerful. And the Algonquin tongue he had used so little in the last six years came welling up to his mouth. He was gorgeous in his scarlet, white, and gold—but his sword he had not on him. His dark face was full of confidence. He looked about him with a sober pride—but without either scorn or fear.

“My Brothers, I see that before ever I came to you, the war-dance was danced and the hatchet painted red. The Englishman was late, and yonder Philip early. And you have thought

to have settled all things among you. You have clasped the broken feeble hand of Philip and let go the strong and kindly hand of your English brothers.

"Listen, then, to me.

"My Brothers, the Nipmucs—you have nothing to gain fighting the English. You have everything to lose. For we will fight back, I promise you! I promise you your brooks shall run with your blood and your streams choke with your carcasses. . . . And for what gain?

"Listen to me!

"I have heard your old men tell that, before we came to dwell among you, every winter many of you starved. But when we came to buy your corn and furs, you grew so rich you are fat even in winter now. Who was it gave you muskets, swine, the liquor that brings joy and forgetfulness? Who replaced your stone knives with knives of steel? For a generation and more we have lived like one family together, either helping the other—your people and my people, to the mutual gain of all. You cannot turn from us and join that traitorous fellow, Philip. And who is Philip? Is he known for his courage, honour? Is he a great leader among you, as his father, Massasoit, was? He is not. But known only for his quarrelsomeness, his touchy childish pride, and his crooked hand. Will you go on the war-path for such a fellow?

"Listen! Listen! You shall listen to me.

"Consider once more—before blood has been shed and seams of war ripped open! You have thought once on this matter. Now, before it is too late, think twice! For war is easy to start, and hard to end. Think once more! Sagamore John, Monoco, Old Straw Fellow, Maltonas, Sam of Nashaway, Tonic, Wolf-Woman's Child—when have I ever come to you with lies? Believe me now. I tell you, you may as well plunge

a knife in your own bowels as to carry the hatchet against us. If you do, you shall die, and your women shall die and your children as well—if you follow this black trail through trail-less night, clasping the deformed hand of King Philip.

"But if you will come with me, I will lead you on broad trails and into sunlight, by still waters and green fields. Now must you decide. Now, before it is too late! For once you have wetted your fingers and wrists in English blood . . ."

Heavily, the great form of Philip got to its feet.

"You are late come with your lies and your parleys, you spawn of the English! Who, think you, took those heads? You think I did, down Mount Hope way? My men, the Wampanoags? No, no—it was a war-party of your friends, the Nipmucs. They came back from Mendon last night only. They slew as it pleased them, and a few of your great fighting men said, 'Please don't.' But no one stopped them."

Fenton and King Philip faced each other, both upon their feet, and they looked into each other's eyes. Fenton had known as soon as he saw King Philip at the council that his mission was lost before it had been started, but even now he did not fear greatly for his life. He counted on the Indians' prolonging everything—their parleyings and their murdering. Let them give him but a little time and he would escape, even out of this. He had a superstitious feeling that if now was the time to die he would know it. But now was the time to live! He stood before the hostile assemblage, filled with fighting spirit, as though his strength had doubled and tripled. He never felt less confused or more sure of himself.

The crowd outside had begun to clamour for his blood and set up a ghastly howling. It was only a flimsy wall of green birch leaves that protected him from that mob. Now, as if catching the contagion from the folk outside, the council was

breaking up without due order, crowding about him in an unseemly way. So Fenton knew that neither Philip nor Old John were greatly respected, for great leaders kept better order about them.

It was for his life they clamoured: the gauntlet, the stake, the live flesh stripped from the green bones, his head upon a pole.

He had come to the council unarmed. If he had as much as a knife upon him he might have burst into fighting frenzy and been satisfied to kill as many as he might, and then die. Hands upon his sleeves. A blow across the mouth. Then Totonic, quickly, in English:

"Do not resist. Trust me."

At that moment it would have been easy to resist—and die; to be inert, all but impossible. He did the hard thing, for he was bound without resistance. His hampering, gaudy clothes were stripped from him, and the great boots presented to Philip. His arms were bound across his chest. The whole upper half of his body was thrust into a cow-hide sack, such as the Indians used for carrying corn. This was tightly tied about his waist. His feet, now without covering, were also tied. There was one moment of almost uncontrollable panic, when he felt no air could get to him through the leather and surely he would suffocate—a great agony, a revulsion of the flesh against death. But he would not permit himself to struggle, for to struggle would waste the air. He let his body relax. So, he was carried by the triumphant savages, and the assembly streamed out after him.

The pretty leafy bower was left deserted.



5

HE was dragged he knew not where and kicked and beaten—he supposed by the women, for prisoners were the care of the women. For many hours he lay almost unconscious. The day must have ended now, he thought, and night begun, but he could not see. In vain he tried to gnaw a hole through the thick hide. He could reduce a piece of it to a nauseating pulp, but even his strong teeth could not get through.

His life, he believed, depended upon two things: in how great a hurry these tribes were to be off (for they would wish to kill him with a certain amount of cruel formality—it would not do merely to hit him on the head); and Totonic. But Totonic, he saw, was not in a strong position with the Nipmucs. All had been cold and slighting to him. Him, too, they might slay. And he thought as well of Tobey.

It was morning (but he hardly knew whether the first or second morning of his captivity) when the sack was taken from his head and chest and the clean living air flowed over him. He filled his lungs with great content. His feet had been tied to a tree, and neither they nor his arms were released. At first he blinked about him, for the sun was up and shining upon his face. He lay in an open glade beside a brook. The squaws were preparing food and the smell of their stuff started the saliva in his dry mouth. His body was so numb and stiff it was like waking in the body of an old and paralyzed man. Totonic came to him, kicked him in a sneering way, and, mocking, asked how he enjoyed the Indians' hospitality. Fenton saw he played a part and answered him in surly tones. On leaving, Totonic addressed the women and told them if for a few days they took good care of his captive, he would pay them well. He would

meet them as soon as might be at Chaubunagungamaug. So he told Fenton in which direction he was to be taken and that he was Totonic's own prisoner.

Not far from him, staked out to another tree (like a lamb at grass), was a fair-haired English lad of twelve or thirteen. He was slight and beautiful, with enormous grey eyes fringed with jet lashes, staring out of a thin white face. Those eyes never left Fenton's face. They were full of trust and confidence. Fenton could not meet those heart-breaking glances.

Himself he might save; this delicate child he could not. So for some time they lay far apart—the lad staring at the man; the man, frowning and staring at his cleverly knotted hands and legs. At last Fenton could not endure the silence of the other and the appalling trust in those eyes, always begging him to save him. He said, "From whence are you, lad?"

The white lips parted, struggled, and turned down, showing small pathetic teeth. He mouthed horribly and at last got out the word, "M-mm-mmm-endon." He stammered so as to be nearly dumb. And that is why, thought Fenton, his eyes can express so much. They have had to serve him for everything because his tongue is tied.

He thought of his own Anselm and Jude. He gazed soberly at the captive child. A hard day is this for his mother, for doubtless, being so afflicted, she has made much of him. And now her costling is off with the wolves. . . . He asked the boy about his family. The eyes started and, with difficulty, it came out that his father had been shot in the cow pasture . . . his mother and two of his brothers killed with an axe. He did not know what had become of his sisters.

Fenton turned to the squaws, who were gorging themselves. He asked courteously for food for himself and the child. They giggled, nudged each other, mimicked a word he had mispro-

nounced; but he spoke so fairly that at last they put a bowl of mush in the lad's hands and fed the man some greasy stuff with a horn spoon. They did not dare unbind his sinewy hands. When he questioned them, they were not unfriendly, but curious and a little afraid. They answered that they were from Chaubunagungamaug and had agreed to take care of him for Totonic, who was going back to his own people to summon his young men. When these came, Fenton would be put to torture. Totonic had bet that he would not cry out, no matter what horrors were inflicted on him. One plump and rather handsome matron said that Totonic had promised her the Englishman's stomach for a medicine bag if she could get one groan out of him. She coveted this stomach.

"If you are the owner of my stomach after death, 'tis your duty to care for it in life—and 'tis still empty."

They all laughed, and the matron gave him more food.

Many of the Indians had already gone. From where he lay by the brook side, he could hear the guttural cries, the dragging of loads, the muffled shuffling of feet. The war-parties were already setting forth. From words he overheard, he believed the young men would be sent against the Connecticut River towns. He would be left to the women and the old men, who he knew would soon go south to their famous lake. Now it was time for his captors to pack their loads, and they set to work in high spirits. Four braves in war-paint, carrying flint-locks of good design, came suddenly upon them. These were the only fighting men he saw. Fenton spoke to one of them. He thought he was a son of Old Straw Fellow from Wachusett. The man's face became convulsed with fury. He shortened his weapon as if to smash in his head, so Fenton kept quiet—but he waited his chance. These warriors, although not of the same tribe as the women, were obviously to go along as guards. They were

angry because they would be detained to do this womanish work and might not immediately set out on the war-path.

It was afternoon before the guard finally cut the thongs upon his legs and helped him to swollen and bloodless feet that at first refused to support him. He was tied to the tail of a horse, which an ancient man of dignity (probably their chief man) essayed to ride. Most likely he had never sat astride a horse before. Half the squaws, chattering and laughing, pushed him upon the creature's back. It was a young plough horse, little more than a colt. Whenever Fenton pulled back, the colt lashed out with his heels, which delighted the childish minds of the women. How the old fellow clung on Fenton could not understand, but he did. The sullen warriors scouted along the trail far ahead. The band of women, children, and old people relaxed and enjoyed themselves. When night fell, a camp was prepared and fires lit. This was the second night of Fenton's captivity.

The white boy told him that his name was Priam. He lay with the women on the far side of the fire. He was so exhausted he could not eat the food offered him, and the Indians discussed whether or not to bother with him further or brain him with a club. But the plump matron to whom Totonic had promised Fenton's stomach was loud in his defence. Her dead boy would now be about the age of this white child. She wished to adopt him for herself. So the women wrangled, and Fenton, tied hand and foot, once more lay quietly with the few men.

The situation he found himself in made all his recent life seem unreal, as though it had happened to another man. This other man had lived in Boston, in the old Macey house. He was a partner in Fayrweather and Parre. He was also Commander of the Boston Forts. He had a wife and, he believed, two sons. He tried to remember Star's face: the mouse-coloured bangs,

the serious eyes beneath their slender brows. She seemed infinitely far away, as though she had been dead for years. And the little boys who looked so like her . . . was it less than a week ago he had gone from the Governor's Council to their chamber and kissed their sleepy faces before setting off for Canaan?

Fayrweather and Parre now owned four ships. He could scarcely remember their names, although this other man had taken great pride in them. But those things that had happened in his youth, up to the time he had gone to England, came back as reality. It was as if he had been asleep for six years and had at last awakened. This was his real self. This cold, tired man, lying in direst danger amongst enemy Indians, watching the moon above him through the oak leaves, hearing the lap of lake water, and the hellish laughter of the loons. Now was he shorn of everything the years had brought him: respect, money, a fine uniform, a house, and a wife. He had nothing but himself, and he felt alive and real once more.

He had been given no mat to sleep on, nor had pains been taken to find a comfortable place for him, and he lay upon stones. He had no covering but a pair of Indian drawers which had been exchanged for his uniform. Most of the night he lay and shivered. This was not the first time that he had been captured by the savages.

He had been sixteen, and his father had just made him his agent. He had gone far north among the Tarratines, with a small hunting party of the Swamp Town Indians' relatives, the Nashaways. He never knew whether the Nashaways abandoned him in the forest, or whether in fact he lost his way. But he was taken prisoner and became a slave of the local squaw-sachem, near Lake Winnepesaukee. This woman—as big and strong as a man, young, and in her own way handsome—had

continually beaten and abused him. She was always shouting at him the tortures she would inflict. She had never been able to let him alone. A Mohawk boy, younger than himself and also a captive, told him that if he made himself attractive to her she might choose to marry him, for she was a widow, and widows had the right to marry whom they pleased among the captives. Fenton set about to win his freedom even at this cost.

One day his big mistress followed him into the woods to watch him pick up fire-wood. She had a whip with her, not unlike the English cat-o'-nine-tails, and she screamed at him and, as always, lashed at him with the whip. Fenton, who had been docile enough, now turned on her—for they were far from camp. It was as if instinctively he had known that during the month of his captivity she had at heart always wanted him to turn on her and assert himself as a man and her master. The two fought together ferociously, for the lad had not reached his mature strength and weight. She was the strongest woman he had ever seen—nine-tenths a man and one-tenth a woman. Both came out of the fray badly pommelled and bruised, but Fenton had won. He sat, heaving and bloody, on a boulder, the whip in his hand, and he bade her pick up the sticks. A few days later she told her tribe that she had decided to marry him and he was now a man of her tribe.

The Indians were sullen and angry, and Fenton saw that as quickly now as might be he must make his escape or they would murder him. He was given complete freedom, and he watched his chance. Chances came, and his danger from the angry, wordless Indians grew; but he let the chances go, and he came back, again and again, to the woman's bed. Now she was as slavish and docile to him as formerly she had been arrogant; but every now and then something in her made her try

her strength again against him to see if he were still worthy, and they would fight brutally. So they lived together for three months as man and wife—a stormy household, but highly satisfactory to the queer woman.

Then one day, when on a hunting party far east towards the coast, he slipped away and, after a week of suffering in the wilderness, reached Dover. He had hardly thought of this squaw-sachem Mamoose and his "marriage" with her, for years. Now it all came back with vehement intensity. Now it was Star whom he could not remember. And the feeling of the savage woman's biceps swelling under his hands was stronger than the memory of Star's gentle breast. Sixteen he had been, and that was seventeen years ago—she, the first woman he had ever had.

Turn as he might, there was one stone under him he could not escape, and he began to wonder if it was not something hidden in his drawers. With cautious movements, he finally edged his thigh up to his bound hand. With one numb finger, he felt the hilt of a knife. At that moment he reverted to his Puritanism and thanked God for Tonic. He did not doubt but it was he who had, in some way, put this weapon upon him. The tawny men slept about him—but only give him a knife and he would make his escape.

On the next day the young plough horse went lame in his off front foot. He was beaten and stuck with knives until he was trembling with fear and pain, for the Indians were sure he was lame through malice. They knew nothing of horses—this being the first they had ever possessed. Confidently, Fenton offered to cure it. Now at last his hands were to be unbound. When the stiffness had gone out of his fingers, he stroked the colt and then examined the hoof. Far up in the frog he saw a grey quartz arrow-head embedded. It was sharp as a knife and the

colour of the hoof bone. The Indians knew so little of the normal hoof they had not noticed it.

The colt, with sweated flanks and hanging head, waited patiently for this man whom he felt to be his friend to take it out; but when Fenton touched it with his finger, the horse lashed about in pain. So he threw the animal and ordered the jolly plump matron to sit upon his head. No sooner had he seen the arrow-head than he knew it was a thing that he could use—but they must not see him take it. He said he must have hot water, mullein leaves, saltpetre from the powder bags.

Little by little, he worked the quartz point loose. The women, in good humour, ran clucking about. The young warriors stood watching him, half in curiosity, half in suspicion—but entirely in hatred. When he had wasted much of their time and most of their patience, he said he would suck out the poison, and he put his lips to the hoof. So he drew the arrow-head into his mouth. He stood up smiling, and held out his arms to be bound. The horse still limped, but he was obviously cured; and the old man—whoever he might be—was again hoisted aboard. He made Fenton walk beside him. It seemed he had, of late years, suffered from rheumatics. Could the white man suck the poison from his feet and cure him? Fenton said the moon was in the wrong quarter. Let it be in the third quarter. He hoped the ancient had enough power over his people to see to it that for such a period the white man was kept alive.

The Indians had not taken a direct route to their own settlement. Fenton could not understand their wanderings. He ate, and even slept, with the knife-sharp quartz in his mouth. The Indians' pace was so slow he believed that only now had they come close to Lake Quinsigamond. He heard them indicate a certain bald swelling hill as Asknebumskit, and he knew that

this was near Quinsigamond. They camped that night beside a bright cascade where water bounded among mossy boulders. Tatnuck, they called the place. This was where he must escape and tonight was the night. The leaping water would drown out the sounds he might make. He laughed at their woodcraft. Any Indian lad of eight, he had thought, would know enough never to camp (except in times of greatest security) beside noisy water. But the old man had come here before and bathed in the cascade. It had helped his rheumatics. Now he would try it again.

All slept: men, women, and children. Above was the full moon, and the water rustled down the brief ravine. He noticed two of the warriors were not about. Either they were stationed as sentinels or had abandoned the expedition for more exciting pastimes. Holding the arrow-head in his teeth, he sawed through the thongs that bound his wrists. When his hands were loosened, he took Totonic's knife from his clout and cut the rawhide on his legs. Then he waited a little, turning and stretching to get the stiffness out.

The English lad slept too. Fenton saw the dull light from the dying fire upon his white cheek, the shadow of his black lashes, the thin, bound hands. He hesitated in pity. Anselm . . . Jude. . . . The lids rose slowly and with a sigh the child awoke. His eyes sought Fenton's. Fenton put his finger to his lips and shook his head. The boy nodded, without hope and without reproach, knowing that he was abandoned.

Fenton slid off into the forest, his knife in his hands, his eyes glancing about him for a sentinel. What little noise he made was covered by the bright cascade. Suddenly, when he had gone a hundred yards or more, he heard a grunt—such as a pig might make if you fell over it in the dark. First the Indian was on top of him and then he on top of the Indian. But he

got his knife into the man's windpipe and stifled his scream with his body and hands. In a little, the writhing body beneath him grew still. Then he dared get up from the corpse he lay on—Old Straw Fellow's son. He glanced this way and that. Nobody had heard the brief scuffle. He squatted beside the bloody, still warm head and carefully cut about the scalp lock, ripping it with his fingers but not using his teeth as Indians did. This was the first scalp he had ever taken, but he knew it would not be the last.

He was filled with exultation. Alive and free! Alive and once more free!

6

THAT summer Jazan saw crops neglected, and for weeks all the available men who were not at the moment under arms worked from before dawn until after dark, setting up a great palisade of upright tree trunks about Paradise. Most of the barns and outhouses were included, but Fenton's old fur house, the boathouse, and a few other buildings were pulled down, as they could not be allowed inside the fortifications. The house walls were lined with brick. The windows, which had never been large, were reduced to loop-holes. Even on sunny days it was dark twilight within. But, a little contemptuously, the study was not brick lined. The Fearing library was thick enough upon these walls to stop a bullet.

The attic floor, where usually flax and hemp were stored, was cleaned of these combustibles and strewn with inches of sand, so that if the roof did catch fire the whole house would not immediately burst into flames.

And what was done at Paradise was also done at Blue's mill (chosen because it was of stone) and at Colonel Coffin's. The meeting-house was already half fort, but it was further

strengthened. Each family was instructed to which garrison they should go if (or rather, when) the dread word came that the Indians were about to attack. Into four garrisons the three hundred inhabitants of Canaan would gather.

At a break of day in September when Jazan lay abed with Isobel, Tom Pigge and other workmen arrived, saying they were ordered to dig a well within the house. The spot their divining-rod indicated was within three feet of the woman's bed and, sweating and spitting, they began to tear up the floor-boards. There was no cellar under this room. Before she could get herself and her weeping baby dressed, they were digging into the earth with their pickaxes and spades, flinging their dirt everywhere. Jazan began to think the Indians themselves would not be worse than this rabble. Isobel, feeling her mother's irritation, roared with rage, and Jazan carried her out of doors and beyond the palisades. From where she sat by the willows nothing of the old house showed above the gigantic fence of tree trunks but the chimneys and the two highest of the peaked gables. Like two pricked dog's ears they looked, listening for the sound of danger.

Now that Canaan was so well fortified, she was much more afraid than she had been earlier in the summer. She knew what this preparation meant. All summer the army of the United Colonies had fought to save the villages that were sprinkled along the Connecticut River, fifty miles to the west. Three only had been spared complete destruction. The Indians had been victorious. The bloody war would now be fought but thirty miles, roughly, from Boston. Chelmsford and Concord, Lancaster, Groton, Canaan, and Sudbury, separated the one from the next by but a few miles, zigzagged north and south across the Colony—now no longer peaceful rural hamlets, but a series of forts.

Only the month before there had been a ferocious raid upon Lancaster. Mendon and Brookfield had been burned and abandoned. Soon now, any time, it might be Canaan's turn. Any morning they might wake to hear the screaming of the savages; to see the skies flying flame; to realize for themselves the horrors of Indian torture. And the worst of it was, half at least of the young men of Canaan were always with the main army along the Connecticut. They took turns between them so that no man's farm might be utterly ruined by his absence. Gervase Blue had been home but one week only, then immediately ordered to Deerfield. If only Gervase were here! And Fenton, since his miraculous escape from the Indians, had been but once to Paradise and then for a night only.

Her thoughts, as she sat by the willows rocking her baby on her knee, were interrupted by the arrival of a mounted officer and twenty soldiers, carrying long flint-locks on their shoulders. The dogs gave them their usual greeting. Great Indian fighters they might be, but Jazan noticed that they stopped where they were until she ran to Gone-away and Tiger and told them to let these strangers pass. In the saddle sat a gentleman of some years, bald and rubicund.

"Captain Younglove, Madam." His eyes twinkled as though he himself saw the humour of his name. "I'm sent out to aid the citizens of Canaan, Sudbury, Concord, in their patrols and defences. With your permission, ma'am, I'll make headquarters here."

The young woman's heart sank. So it was as bad as this. She knew no military protection was allotted to a town unless it was in dire danger. The men were too much needed in more aggressive warfare—an aggressive warfare which, thus far, had lamentably failed. Why could not the men Canaan had sent out

be returned, instead of these strangers being foisted upon them?

"Well," he said cheerfully, "God's will be done! The vermin got us at Deerfield four days back." And, as he followed her into the hall, he told her of the defeat and death of Captain Lothrop and his Essex Troops—the famous massacre of Bloody Brook. Battle, it was not. Cheerfully, he ended with a "God *has* inscrutable ways!"

The soldiers began to build a cooking fire out of doors, and Jazan bade Phoebe give them whatever grain they might want. The Captain obviously would dine with the family.

"I am much blessed, Madam, that I am come to a pious household. I know that your husband is a man of God; and in God (not in our feeble arms) is our true defence."

Jazan did not take these words seriously at first, but within a week she saw that this was in truth Captain Younglove's belief. He was at once a most cheerful man and a most pious one. He actually seemed to believe that praying and fasting would have more effect upon the outcome of the war than performing his obvious duty of patrolling the road north to Concord and south to Sudbury.

One morning when a farmer arrived from Chelmsford, saying the Indians had burned a haystack, he piously said God's will had been done. He did not start for Chelmsford until after he had eaten well and listened decorously to Mr. Fearing's morning prayers.

His soldiers were little better than himself. They were mostly fishermen and sailors, impressed into service from about Gloucester and Marblehead. Their one idea was to sit about in the taverns in the towns they were sent to protect and show themselves off to the local wenches. In the woods they were supposed to patrol, they often got lost. Jazan herself one day

had to plough through Cat Den Swamp beyond the Great Commons to rescue them. Nor, when harvest came upon them, were they ready to help in the fields. Canaan was almost ready to petition for the removal of Captain Younglove and his twenty.

An order came from Boston saying that all the friendly Indians (and this included Swamp Town, for there was no proof that Tonic and his young men were not away hunting) were ordered to be collected in one of the five allotted camps provided for them. Captain Younglove assembled his soldiers. The remaining Indian people, old men and women and children, carrying what they might on their backs, were driven like cattle to Marlborough. But once they were gathered there—many hundreds of neutral and friendly Nipmuc Indians—it was found impossible to feed and police so many. A week later the women and children drifted back to Swamp Town; but only half as many came back as fared forth to Marlborough.

Home again, they found that in their absence hoodlums had burned their huts and bedding. The town had voted that the Indian corn fields should be harvested for the "common benefit," and Deacon Noah Bailey was in charge. When Clara and Johnny went out to work their own land after their trip to Marlborough, dogs were set on them. They did not protest, but leaving the charred remains of Swamp Town, they betook themselves further into the swamp. Very long ago, when first the white men had come, Sagamore Chicken-Chuck had built a mysterious fort on an island in the midst of the cedar swamp. Now, the women and children of his tribe retired to this old and rotting fort and philosophically settled down to starve there.

Christopher Parre, like John Eliot and Gookin, vehemently protested the treatment that the "praying Indians," and others

friendly disposed towards the white men, received. Their point of view was so unpopular they could not walk the streets of Boston without imprecations and filth being thrown at them. This was a racial war. All Indians were now hateful to the Colonists. Largely through the efforts of Forethought Fearing, the town reluctantly voted at least to feed the remnant of Totonic's people that now dwelt so miserably at Cedar Fort. The ten thousand acres of Indian land, they already felt that they possessed.

Then fifteen of the Canaanites who had been under arms since August were returned to their families, and another fifteen were immediately sent out. The returned soldiers had proof, they said, that Totonic had never taken his men north. Flying Stone had been killed at Long Meadow, and they showed his hand to prove it. This Indian had hands webbed like a duck. Everyone in Canaan knew of Flying Stone's hands. It was all the proof Canaan needed of Totonic's treachery—his brothers had been fighting at Long Meadow. And again and again reports had come of an "Indian lad of fourteen or so," who fought with savage cunning. Boston was notified and a price was set upon Totonic's treacherous head.

One night a report came that back of Quantog's Woods a party of Indian warriors had been seen and later that they were being entertained at Cedar Fort. A mob quickly assembled and armed themselves with staves, clubs, and liquor, as well as muskets. They found at Cedar Fort signs of feasting, but not a male Indian above fifteen and under sixty. In the scuffle that followed, Totonic's eldest son, a beautiful fearless lad of ten or twelve, was pierced to the heart with a knife. The Canaanites claimed it was another Indian boy who had done this, mistaking him in the dark for a white man; but his stepmother,

Johnny Pigge, claimed that it was Piers Gurdson who had so wantonly killed the child.

The case was tried before a jury in Cambridge, and Gurdson was not only acquitted of murder but praised for his good deed. So the first four months of King Philip's War passed over Canaan in confusion and dread—but not in great danger.

7

NOW, as the warfare crept closer and closer to the sea-coast (and to the more important divines) many were ready to try another method. God alone could save them. God was angry with his people for that they had become lax and remiss in piety. He had not permitted such a catastrophe in their fathers' day—those sainted folk who had come out from England to worship God in freedom. Yet in those early days an Indian attack would have wiped out every white man. The belief that God's wrath and the Indians' wrath were one gained headway.

Days of public fasting and prayer were proclaimed. The Quakers once more were persecuted with old-fashioned fury. In scores of pulpits clergymen lashed their flocks. A wave of religious hysteria swept the Colony.

Canaan, exposed to momentary danger, shepherded by a most eloquent preacher, fell like one man upon its face and begged for forgiveness. The Sabbath was not long enough. Every day groups of friends met in one house or another for prayer and religious refreshment. With tireless passion, Forethought would go to these sheep of his bosom. Men and women hung upon his words. Women wept and burned their false hair, eschewed their great sleeves, covered the nakedness of arm and bosom. Men swore as long as they lived never again to let mundane matters stand between them and God. Never

had religious feeling run so high. It swept through Canaan, East Canaan, and Kine Brook like a great wave, and upon the crest of this wave was Forethought Fearing.

One day, still in harvest time, Gervase Blue came back. He rode up to the kitchen door. Jazan would not have recognized the old jade he rode as the young mare he had left upon for the Connecticut last July. He himself looked hard and worn, as though he held both his own life and the lives of others light. Goody Goad limped out to meet him; kissed him with the tears running down her cheeks. After all, she had been something of a mother to him during his first years at Paradise—the most of a mother he had ever had. Phoebe began to laugh. It was a strange sight to see the tight-lipped young man in the Goodwife's embrace, to see her motherly moustache pressed to his worn cheek. Everyone laughed—even Jazan. She had not a word of welcome for him. She went to her bed-chamber where Lambkin lay scolding her broken toys.

"He has come back, Lambkin—oh, he *has* come back!"

She heard Gervase question who the three stranger-men might be, a-lolling in the kitchen (when the farm servants were out in the fields), drinking and eating pie.

"Men of Captain Younglove's patrol, Gervase."

"Why are not they at work on the harvest if they are not patrolling?"

"They are soldiers—and before that, they were sailors. I doubt if they would understand the work."

"I'll find them work they *do* understand."

Jazan put down her baby and went back to the kitchen. Now the reason for Gervase's return came out. He had a letter from the Military Committee in Boston ordering Captain Younglove to Dedham. He himself had been put in charge of his patrol at Canaan and would take it upon himself to organize

the rest of the harvesting. This had been badly disrupted by the absence of so many men and the "soul-searching" even the farmers had been indulging in. There was danger of food shortage.

Boldly he set to work, armed with his new title of Captain and the power invested in him from Boston. Colonel Coffin, who was in charge of the local military defence, had been instrumental in having the useless Captain Younglove removed, but he was shocked that it was the young bastard Gervase Blue (of all men) who had been sent out to take his place. He had to swallow once or twice before he could accept him. But swallow he did, and from the beginning he backed his young colleague in everything.

No more did the twenty soldiers loll about. Nor were they given the comparatively easy (but dangerous) work of patrolling the roads to Sudbury and Concord. Gervase found enough old men and young boys with their dogs for this. The soldiers were set to work in the fields. At first they were ready to mutiny, but Captain Blue had their respect. Handled well, they proved strong and willing.

There had always been animosity between Gervase and Forethought; but now that Gervase was in a position of authority equal to the minister's, the animosity which had only smouldered flamed forth into fire. The Captain spoke harshly of "this waste of time" involved in religious exercise. He even suggested giving up entirely the Thursday lecture, the imposing of a fine upon people who spent more than fifteen minutes on morning and evening prayers.

"It is not the Devil we are fighting," he said at the first town meeting after his arrival, "but the Indians. And food is of greater import now than bullets. Starvation will end this war—and nothing else."

He shamed the men that they let their "childish fears" keep them from their work. He bade the women "lay down their Bibles and take up the distaff." Mercilessly, he told of how the Indians attacked; how best the town might prepare to resist them. By the time of Gervase's return all the young men had been, for shorter or longer periods, with the army. Many were still away. To those who had actually seen fighting, his words appealed strongly. They set up a loud clamour of approval. They were the first segment of Canaan that he won away from the strangle-hold Mr. Fearing had upon the town.

At Paradise, Gervase still ate in the kitchen with the servants, although his new rank of captain would entitle him to a seat with the master and mistress. He was as unobtrusive as might be; spoke rarely to Jazan. What a parody of living her life had become! When her sister, Hagar, came with others of the most pious (and among these, strangely, was Bathsheba) to pray with Mr. Fearing in his study, Jazan never joined them. But when her services would have been welcomed on the farm, tedding hay or driving a team as she had done for sport as a girl, she was tacitly forbidden to go out. Fearing seemed to hold her in a spell, which Gervase could feel but could not understand. Often he saw her with her baby in her arms, gazing wistfully towards the harvest fields. Lambkin alone shared her aloofness with her.

8

IT was corn harvest time again. Forethought noticed that once more Gervase Blue had failed to come in with his men for morning prayers. His lips set. He opened his Bible for his reading. His heart was hard against him.

Jazan, sitting in the kitchen (for so many of the neighbours

had come to join the household at Paradise in their morning devotions, there was no room left for her in the hall), also noticed Gervase's absence. Goody had told her that Gervase and three men had gone to work so early there had been no breakfast ready for them. Jazan wondered if she might not be able to get into the larder and pack a basket for them without interrupting the devotions in the next room. Isobel, in Goody's arms, was contentedly sucking her beer and brown bread. No one would miss her. She knew where the men cut the corn.

Once out of the house and beyond the palisades, she took the road to the mill; then followed a path through Quantog's Woods, an island of rock and forest in the midst of the rolling richness of the Parre estate. Before her lay the great field known as Labour-in-Vain. Gervase had conquered it, but it had always been a luckless spot. The oxen that had worked there had broken yokes and legs. The men had strained backs, and one had died, twenty years before, of a falling tree. Now it lay, acre after acre of rustling corn. Little and unimportant against so wide a background, four men advanced; their corn knives flashing in their hands. Behind them were stubble and fallen stalks; before them, lofty corn. There was not one man among them that could not have swung Jazan about as easily as his corn knife; yet they did not look strong from this distance, but unaware, unprotected. An Indian, from where she stood, could have taken his choice from among them. And but two weeks ago, at East Canaan, a solitary axe-man had been murdered and scalped by some prowler. Now the men's only guardian began to bark. At this sound the men flung down their knives, and each leaped to his musket. The dog approached, recognized Jazan, and began a friendly whining.

"Mrs. Fearing!" Gervase strode out to meet her. "You gave us a scare. What's amiss? Oh, you brought us breakfast! It

will serve us for dinner, and we need not be back at the house until nightfall."

"Gervase—have you forgotten that man at East Canaan? Should not one of you stand guard? You are far from the house."

"True enough. But we must take our chance. Hardly can I spare a man, this late in the season, for a guard. The corn must come first."

"Before your lives even?"

"Tiger is a good watch-dog."

She told him how long she had stood and watched them before Tiger had noticed her. She did not tell him, now the men stood strong and assured before her, how she had in her heart pitied their weakness, their mortality. Gervase picked up a horse pistol, gave her a fuse and tinder-box.

"Jazan, you stand guard for us. Come. . . ." He led her into Quantog's Woods, out upon a projecting ledge. "Do you see those fathoms of rushes growing along Kine Brook, at the base of the field? It is from there we fear attack—not from the way you came. From here, you get a bird's-eye view. If as much as a cat-tail moves or a redwing flies, and you see not *why*, fire off this pistol and then *run!* Run as fast as you can by the way you came."

The ledge where she was to sit was warm in the sun. She settled herself with content. Before and a little below her was the flat corn field, and she saw the blue smocks of the harvesters tirelessly advancing down the rows. Beyond was the treacherous marsh, following Kine Brook. It was full of redwings making ready for the southern journey. Never could an Indian prowl up through the rushes without the redwings flying. If she did but watch the redwings. . . . Across the brook was a wilderness of colour: the burning orange and flaming

red of the maple, the clear gold of poplar, birch, and beech, the metallic bronzes and coppers of oak. And overhead was the blue, wind-swept sky. She felt washed clean, and her heart expanded.

At noon Jazan went to the mill, which was close at hand, and she sent Jake and Varney to Paradise to tell them that she would not be home until nightfall. Salome, who was back at the mill since the war had cut short her missionary work, gave her an apple-pie and a gallon of cider to take back to Labour-in-Vain. This day's food—of dried fish, parched corn, pie, coarse bread, and cider, tasted to her more delicious than any dinner she had eaten for months. The harvesters sprawled beside her on her look-out ledge.

The afternoon went like the morning except that the twins came to join her. At first she was sorry that her golden solitude was to be interrupted, but she knew their sight was sharp and six eyes better than two. They were fascinated by this new game.

From now on wherever the men worked, Jazan, Jake, and Varney stood look-out for them. The beauty of the season was reflected upon her face. For the first time, she did not care that she was incurring her husband's disapproval. For five years and more, she had lived in dread of his displeasure—and yet she had not been able to pleasure him. Now she had lost her fear of him. What if he was angry with her? Did it matter, then, so much? Hardly at all! She had her work to do, and that was enough. True, there were days together when he would hardly speak to her. She said over and over to herself that she did not care, but this was not entirely true. Hagar came to her and bade her look more closely to her husband's comfort.

"Why does it discomfort him that I stand guard for our men?"

"I should think you would know by now, Jazan. He *says* you neglect Isobel—but I think he does not wish so much as the shadow of that miserable Gervase Blue to fall upon you."

How could he be jealous of her when he regarded her so little? She could not understand. She did not feel her own love for her husband lessening in her, and yet in a way she was loosening herself from its strangling bonds.

9

FENTON PARRE was no longer a major in the Middlesex Regiment and commander of the fortifications of Boston. He had petitioned to be allowed to raise his own troop of horse. These men would not lay down arms until the war was over. They would not be enlisted for one month or two months and then return to their farms, like the militiamen; nor would they or their captain be answerable to any man except only to the War Committee in Boston.

During the terrible and hopeless fighting along the Connecticut, Captain Parre's "Privateers" had been of more service than many whole regiments. Well picked (although one of them, a certain Willy Titmouse, had been under sentence for piracy in Boston Gaol) well trained and armed, the sixty men had now been welded into a single unit. Early in winter word came from Boston ordering all the soldiers of the Bay back to town for reorganization. The few villages that still remained upon the Connecticut would, for the winter, be garrisoned by troops from Hartford. After the fall of the leaves and the first snows, the Indians would most likely withdraw into hibernation.

On his way back from the Connecticut River, Fenton stopped for one night at Paradise. Not until he had seen to the comfort of his troopers did he come into the house. The men set up their tents inside the palisades, cared for their horses, built their camp-fires, set their pots to boiling. Word spread of their coming, and folk crowded in to gaze at them as though they were wild beasts. Lean and hardy they did look—dark skinned, white toothed, their beautiful new flint-locks neatly staked. Each man was equipped with helmet and breast-plate. Fenton had ordered these painted black, so that the sun would not catch on them and betray the presence of the men.

Was it true they were all pirates? No, only one was a pirate. And which one was that? At first the villagers did not recognize the three Canaan boys who had chosen this difficult service: Mercuricus English, Dick Blue, Ralph Denning. These familiar faces had taken on the same expression as those of the other men. They seemed to have lost their individuality—as the militiamen never lost theirs.

It was black night before those who came to call upon Fenton and drink his health were all gone and the man and his steward and his sister sat before the hall fire together.

Forethought would not sit with them. He shut himself into his study. Never could he endure to meet Gervase Blue as an equal.

"They say we are disbanding now for the winter—all except, of course, my own troop and Captain Mosely's Privates—but this is not so. In a week's time one thousand men will be sent against the Narragansetts."

"Why, Fenton?" asked Jazan. "Thus far the Narragansetts have been neutral."

"They are so no longer. At least we have reason to believe that King Philip has gone there for winter asylum—he and

his Wampanoags. Some have advised not even now to stir up the Narragansetts further. They are the strongest tribe in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. And worse yet—their sachem is Canonchet, and he might be a great leader. This the Tawnies have not had under Philip. I mislike the thought of starting up these hornets. But they in Boston . . .” he burst out with some anger, “say the Narragansetts’ lands are worth ten thousand pounds. From the beginning they have wanted Canonchet to side with Philip so they might get his lands.”

Jazan knew why it was Fenton had given up his commission as major; preferred to be only a captain. Everything that Fenton had advised, those in power had been against. His present roving commission suited him better. Now, when there was word of sudden attack, Captain Parre’s quickly moving troop was ordered to the spot. He was never held up by the commissary’s breaking down or by arguments among the officers. He was as independent as any man may be and still be a soldier.

Jazan wished him to tell of the fighting he had seen. He had nothing to say. Gervase, too, had seen enough warfare to have no desire to talk of it. Now she said, “What was that long-legged young stone-horse I saw your men lead in so tenderly?”

Fenton gathered his mind together quickly. He had bought it for almost nothing in the Rhode Island. It was a two year old, of some Moorish breed from Spain he had never seen except at the court of King Charles. He was full of enthusiasm over the colt, “Thorney.” From this horse he would breed a new line, something faster and more delicate than the children of Tobey.

“You will see, Jazan, when the war is over there will be a great demand for swift horses. Everywhere the roads are bet-

ter. There now are plenty of men who will pay a good price for something fast and fine. I'll breed him to Tobey's daughters. This Thorney is almost too delicate. A little of Tobey's colder blood will be well. . . ."

He talked on, seeming wrapped in his admiration for the colt. No regret did he express for the powerful old grey stallion. And it hurt Jazan a little that he could so quickly put Tobey out of his mind and be even better satisfied with his successor. But perhaps he was not—Jazan could never tell.

Before he left, in the very early morning, he found time to go to Orde's; and he tacked up a notice and set seven shillings upon the mantel. Anyone who had a horse fast enough to beat his Thorney in a race five times about the Goose Common might have the money. Billy Bright, the little servant-boy at Paradise, should ride the challenger.

Then Fenton and his men rode off. The snow muffled the horses' hooves. The foggy morning air dimmed the rattle of stirrup against sword. In vain Forethought preached in tearing passion against the evils of horse-racing. Again and again, Billy and Thorney met and vanquished the local horses. In spite of the great danger, men even came from other villages to attempt the seven shillings. And never did Thorney race but Jazan must go to the Common and watch. It was counted unseemly that she should thus boldly go against her husband's expressed commands.

And now Forethought told his people that, because they had given too much thought to "seven shillings and a horse's legs," the Lord would no longer protect them as he had until now. They might look for an attack any night.

Thorney was a bright fox-red, without a white hair upon him. He was so timid, delicate, and spoiled, his little groom began to sleep in his manger to bear him company by night.

A great bond grew up between the servant and the outlandish young stallion. In spite of herself Jazan found she did have some love for the timid thing, with its almost childish ways. It seemed to her that with the coming of Thorney the whole mood of the village lightened. There was more confidence, laughter, and courage. Now, she doubted if the dreary mood of repentance that Forethought had brought to pass in his people had been for their good.

But Forethought promised, confidentially and without a trace of fear, that now he knew. The time of trial was soon coming. The Lord would unleash his wolves and all Canaan would be destroyed, like a second Sodom.

IO

ONE snowy day in late December, Jazan decided to go to the few Indians and carry them a basket of corn. She did this partly in pity and partly to learn if they had heard how the great attack on the Narragansetts had turned out, for no express had as yet come from Boston. She had not gone ten steps beyond the palisades before Jake and Varney joined her. They bounded about like puppies and said they would go too. Since the guarding these three had done together during the harvest, they had become devoted to their aunt—a devotion not entirely returned, for they were such wearing and, in a way, such unapproachable children. Poor Salome had no control over them, and Jazan but very little.

When they reached the charred remains of what once had been Swamp Town, they hunted about for bones, for they believed that a great many Indians had been burned that night the hoodlums had destroyed the Indian town. Jake found what he called a finger bone, although Jazan said it was only a

chicken leg. He let out a blood-curdling war-whoop. Jazan stamped with anger. Not even children were allowed to play with the war-whoop in this year of the great terror. The boys were not insensible to danger. They loved it and thrived on it.

They followed an icy path into the frozen swamp, pushing through alders and cedars. Before them on a rise was the fort Chicken-Chuck had built years before. Within the palisades lived some twenty people in four shabby huts. Jazan put down the heavy basket of corn she had carried upon her back. Instantly old men, women, and children gathered about her, silent as ghosts. Totonic had left over a hundred people behind him, but many had died and many had wandered away. Jazan guessed, by the gaunt faces and eager eyes, that Canaan had not fed this remnant too well.

Johnny led her to her own bark hut. Inside it was ill-smelling, foul, and stifling hot. Dubiously Jazan took the seat of honour offered to her and ordered Jake and Varney to play with the Indian children until she was ready to leave. Mercy clung to her mother. She was five years old and did not look to have one drop of white blood in her. Her eyes had a beady glitter to them, unlike the soft brown of her father's.

"There's but few of 'ee, Jazan darling, that come to us Indians now-a-days."

"Do you get enough to eat?"

"Naw, never enough," she answered cheerfully. "We buried Turtle Woman yisterday—the poor ould worm! Her was so ould her could remember Chicken-Chuck's father's father, and a time when there war two thousand of us here on the Catacoonamaug—'cept her mind was broke and she couldn't remember nozing."

Looking at the Cornish woman, it was hard to believe she was not an Indian. Amazing that Totonic loved this creature.

She felt a slight revulsion at the dirtiness of her friend. She had brought tobacco with her, and Johnny filled a stinking pipe. When she offered it to Jazan she accepted it, and the two sat smoking together—turn and turn about.

"No word from Totonic and his hunters?"

"Never the word. *He* will not be back 'til this fighting's over."

"But Flying Stone was killed at Long Meadow . . . they say."

"An' just because of that, those prime fools at Boston have put a price on Totonic's head."

"Johnny—if you can get word to him, bid him come back. Fenton will take him into his own troop. You know, he has six Mohicans for scouts. Unless Totonic will fight for us, it will be hard for him to prove his friendship."

Johnny was silent for a moment, busy with her vermin. At last she said, "Three nights ago was the attack on the Narragansetts." Jazan did not question her. She took a long pull on the pipe. "Yes?"

"It was the greatest fighting yet. The English, they killed many hundreds of Canonchet's warriors. And they murdered most all his women and cheeldren."

"And Canonchet?"

"Now is he on the war-path. He will avenge his women and cheeldren. And that Fenton Parre . . ."

Jazan's heart stopped.

"Yes?"

"They got him over the head with an axe. He was the first man to jump down inside the fort. A'course he would be."

"They killed him?"

"Naw, naw. He had on a helmet. But there he lay, in a

swound, upon the ground. Howsomever, a guest of Canonchet . . . he saved him."

Jazan knew this "guest" was Totonic.

"Your husband—he was not hurt?"

A crafty look came into the woman's eyes. "I have heard naught of my husband for nine months. He is north with his hunters . . . I tell 'ee."

Jazan changed the subject. "Is it true the French and Dutch give the Indians fire-arms and powder?"

"I've heard tell so, too. No one loves the Bay Colony—not the French to the north nor the Dutch to the west nor England back over the sea. Not Plymouth Colony, not the Rhode Island—much. And Connecticut, not at all. Her's been high-handed to everyone. 'Tis time someone taught her a prettier manner."

"Do you think roasting babies on spits in front of their mother's eyes, and pulling the entrails out of old women, a prettier manner?" asked Jazan hotly.

"'Twus Piers Gurdson stabbed Totonic's lad to death. Nineteen only was Totonic when this boy was bornded, and such love had he for the English, he carried this little nestle-bird to your father and asked him to name him a lucky name. 'Fortunatus,' the Judge said he was to be called. Fortunatus! Fortunatus—indeed! Piers Gurdson stabbed him."

"I can't say much for us white folk, Johnny. Nor for the Indians either."

Johnny shrugged. "Well-a-fyne!" she ejaculated, and sucked hard on the pipe. "There's naught white man can say that means either good nor ill to me, no more. I'm as much an Indian as ould Clara-Wood-Tree."

"And you like it so?"

"Ay, passing well. Rather would I be a fitty wife to To-

tonic than a faggot to a pious scriff-scruff." Mercy was curled close to her mother. Her beady eyes had not once left Jazan's face. "Thee's glad to be an Indian, Marcy darling?" said her mother, kissing the horsehair on the child's head. But the shy child covered her face with her arm. "Promise me the one thing only, Jazan. If we—all of us that once wus Swamp Town—come to ruin and are sold off into slavery to Jaimacky and the Moors—as other Indians have been, this last year—you will buy up this only cheeld of mine left to me and breed her up to be a proper servant-woman at Paradise?"

"But what happened to Hoapestill?"

"Aw, that Hoapestill! He took one look at the mitting-house and one other at Swamp Town—liked neither, and died. And do you promise me to take Marcy?"

"I give you my hand in promise, Johnny. But they will not sell you off—if your men are not fighting."

Johnny looked at her reproachfully. "They will be rid of every Indian, friendly or neutral, when they are done with this war. Every one. Did 'ee not know? This is no war. This is extermination. On one side or t'other. Well—thus it is."

Jazan tried to persuade Johnny to go to Deer Island, where great hordes of savages had been brought together in captivity and were being cared for by Christopher Parre and other missionaries to the Indians.

"If I starve, I starve here. An' here I may see Totonic's face before we both be dead."

"Johnny, I know you often hear from him. Tell him to join the English. Fenton loves him—he will be safe."

"'Tis too late now, Jazan," said the woman sadly.

II

THE short winter day was growing dark when at last she left Cedar Fort. The sky was grey, without a trace of sunset colour. From this lowering sky snowflakes slowly fell. She looked out at the frozen river. There was not a house in sight, and she knew she had not done well to be thus abroad. It would be utterly dark by the time she reached the garrison of Paradise.

Thus far, Canaan had escaped most of those endless small depredations which Chelmsford and Groton, Marlborough and Sudbury, had endured: here and there a solitary man or woman butchered, cattle stolen or wantonly maimed, the burning of hayricks and outlying barns. Jazan believed that this was in some way due to the influence of Totonic; yet, so badly had Canaan treated its Indians, she would hardly have blamed him if he retaliated. And his own son! Totonic had loved and been proud of his unfortunate Fortunatus. It would go hard with him, if he knew that he had been stabbed to death and his murderer went unpunished. The snow creaked under foot, and Jake and Varney went quietly and with only a minimum of snowballing and shrieks.

Half-way back, she saw a man's figure approaching her and for a second she was afraid. Who but an Indian would be taking this path, after dusk, to Swamp Town? Every half-seen figure was a thing of danger in these days. It was Gervase Blue. And he carried a flint-lock on his shoulder.

"Jazan, it worried us that you tarried so. To both north and west there are hostile Indians. Did you not hear the drums beaten for all to go inside the garrisons?"

"I was too far away—and sitting inside Johnny's hut."

He looked about him quickly and now carried his gun in his hands.

"They have all arrived," he said, smiling, "all your guests—the whole hundred of them."

When they reached the palisade, they found the gate bolted and barred. It was Forethought who opened it to them. His face was ghastly through worry. He was justly angry with his wife that she made him suffer.

"If you had no thought of yourself, Jazan, and did not care whether you lived or not, at least you might think of Isobel." He did not say, "You might think of me." She half waited for this natural remark. Yet why should he say it? Was not Hagar right? Again and again she told her sister—and doubtless Forethought as well—that the woman was a burden to him, a load upon his soul. Yes, this she had, inadvertently, become. She could not see anything as he saw it. There was not one thing they had in common, except only the baby. This child had first disappointed the man and now irritated him, and yet she knew he loved her.

That night a band of Indians did steal up to the Hurling-hearts' (now empty, for the family had been gathered for the night at the meeting-house, which was the garrison assigned to them). They stole one horse and some old blankets. This was the first night when all the Canaanites slept in garrison, and it seemed something of a rehearsal. The women sat up gossiping, with the babies in their laps. The men went out in small armed groups, reconnoitring for the enemy, passing from one garrison to the next, and at each receiving hot flip to drink and a warm welcome.

All night the town was patrolled, and the four garrisons protected the non-combatants. Not an Indian was seen. Doubtless the savages were far away. But the next day, at high noon,

they shot a woman who had gone but a little way into Quantog's Woods after fire-wood. This was upon the Parres' own lands and always poor people had been allowed to go there and gather faggots. The woman had died where she fell, the blood bubbling up into her mouth. Jazan, like the rest of the village, went to see her as she lay there in the white snow; the purple gummy blood about her lips, her white hair loosened in the death struggle. It was the first person Jazan had seen killed by the Indians. The meaninglessness of the attack outraged her.

No one went abroad except heavily armed, and in numbers. Luckily there was, at this time of year, little farm work to do. The usual mending of fences, felling timber, and clearing new fields was neglected. In one way there was almost more leisure than in other winters, for everyone was waiting for the attack.

Colonel Coffin, feeling his age (for he was over eighty) suggested that Captain Blue take over his office as commander of the local troops, as well as the twenty detailed from Boston. This, the town voted to do. Now was Gervase Blue in a position of power greater than that of the clergyman. He commanded that there should be no more of these prayer-meetings. It was not safe that often after dark women and children should thus prowl about, nor had he enough men to send with them as escort. Forethought, in a towering rage, preached an inflaming sermon. Their first duty was to God—God who would stop this war tomorrow, if he could be persuaded that his people were truly repentant.

"What protection to us are these lazy, dissolute soldiers—and their impious captain? I would rather trust entirely in God's mercy, and send these wastrels away."

But Forethought was defeated. The Selected Men, in whom

was vested final authority, decided Gervase Blue was right. And popular opinion supported him.

Still, a few met on the sly (usually at the Abraham Blues') and took great pleasure in these stolen forbidden meetings, the psalms sung under one's breath, the whispered prayers. The godly stole from shadow to shadow, like persecuted heretics. It was like stories their grandfathers had told of secret meetings in the days of James I and Bishop Laud. Their souls expanded under this persecution. Of the dozen or so that met often thus, Bathsheba was always one. She never needed to be told when or where a secret prayer-meeting was to be held. She would always appear at the place and on the hour. This strengthened the belief that she was a witch—but an odd witch, that used her art to lead her to prayer rather than to the Witches' Sabbath. She also would often have good knowledge of whether or not the Indians were about, what neighbouring villages had been attacked. Once Jazan asked her how she got this knowledge. She did not answer until she had been questioned thrice.

"I'll tell you, Jazan, and you may do as you see fit in telling others. The truth is, I do not go in my own proper shape—but in a wolf shape. 'Tis marvellous how light and fast I run, once I get on four paws."

"Nonsense!" said Jazan.

I 2

CONFIDENTLY it was claimed that Indians do not fight in winter. For their warfare leafy trees are necessary. But now, starvation was pressing them. They had been too much harried the summer before to set by even a small store of grain. Canonchet and seven hundred warriors had escaped from Nar-

ragansett. These men had their lives, but their food supplies and their women and children had been destroyed by the English. The only way to get food was from the white men.

That winter the snows had been the heaviest ever remembered, and yet the United Colonies attempted to keep an army in the field. The men froze, even to death, with the cold. The commissary broke down. Their futile ploddings back and forth through the Nipmuc land was called "the Hunger March"—yet their presence must have had some effect upon their enemies. Not until they were withdrawn, late in January, did the Indians break loose once more. They must fight or starve, and an early thaw favoured them.

One day as Gervase Blue and three men were patrolling the woods towards Concord, the dog they had with them set up a howl. There in the snow lay an exhausted and bloody man, unconscious and all but dead. They carried him to Paradise. Cruel it seemed to pull such a one back to life. Before the fire, he screamed in agony as his limbs and hands thawed. Goody Goad said there was no help for it: every toe upon his foot he would lose—and perhaps his life. His mind was shaken. But one story he told over and over, always in the same words, and no one could doubt the truth. Lancaster had been utterly destroyed. There lived only a few such as himself who might have escaped, and those the Indians had taken with them. He told of men's decapitated heads kicked about like footballs, of babies spitted upon spits and set to roast on the hearths, and the minister's wife, Mrs. Rowlandson, screaming in the midst of the flames, her wounded child in her arms; blood upon the snow; the whoops of the savages; the cracking of the muskets. Confidently he said that the Indians had boasted that after Lancaster would come Canaan. Lancaster was but thirty miles away.

His words were verified by scouts sent out to investigate. Beyond Kine Brook to the west, and south of the Sheep Walks, hundreds of Indians were gathering. It seemed as yet an easy matter to get word to those troops who had been sent out (too late) to Lancaster to come to their help. Jimmy Orde offered to attempt this dangerous mission. Another rider was ordered to get to Concord. Jimmy returned with a wound in his foot. To the north, and east as well, they were cut off.

Then Tom Pigge, the village reprobate, with tears running down his sagging cheeks, begged that he might be allowed to make his way by foot to Concord, crawling through Cat Den Swamp and avoiding the road. He made a curious speech of gratitude for the "kindness" Canaan had always shown him. As he had been for the last six years more in the stocks than out, it was hard to see of what the kindness had consisted. But at last he was allowed to go. They could hardly spare another good man on so dangerous a quest. So Tom Pigge started out.

The weather, which had been cold that month, suddenly grew warm. The snow melted in the sunshine and dripped from the eaves. As the sun drew towards setting the drippings froze. From every roof hung great silver icicles, like the swords of an angelic host. The people whispered together . . . it was a sign: those gigantic crystal swords protecting every house. But they wished, now, there had been no horse-racing that winter. . . . And God did seem far away, and a little angry.

Then, at nightfall, Jazan heard the drum beat from the meeting-house roof. This signal told the people to go to their barns and turn loose their cattle to fend for themselves in the woods. If left tied in their stalls all would be butchered. Only a few of the most valuable animals could be saved within the palisades of the garrisons. Four months ago it had been voted

which these animals were. Jazan took the list and, with it in her hand, stood at the gate in the palisade. The cattle and horses which had been put out of the barn hung about the gate, wishing to return to their stalls. There was no fodder in the woods to tempt them. Jazan shook her apron at them and bade them be gone. They would mill about but always come back to the gate and ask to be allowed in.

She heard the drum beat again. Now, every man, woman, and child was to take to the allotted garrison, and the sun was setting. Women with babies in their arms and children clinging to their skirts arrived, driving pigs and sheep before them, and burst into tears and reproaches when Jazan told them that these animals could not be allowed within the palisades—only the choicest creatures that the town had voted to protect. Already the three barns of Paradise were filled with these. A redoubt had been built on top of the barn, overlooking the palisades.

"I know, Goodwife, that 'tis your only cow," Jazan was saying, "but with luck she'll pass the night safe enough. The Indians will not have time to kill many of our creatures—if only they can be made to scatter."

Forethought she found was standing beside her. "I think, Jazan," he said, "these poor women would not be so resentful if it were not for the new horse in the barn—who, I believe, is not on the list."

Jazan looked at her list. She could not believe it, but it was true. The red stallion had come to Paradise since the voting and, by some oversight, his name was not down. She gave her papers to her husband. "This one," she said, "has the names of the animals, and this one the names of the people. Will you not prick them off for me?" And she went inside the barn. Little Billy Bright sat in the horse's manger. She told him

that there was no choice. Thorney must be driven forth outside the palisade.

"Mistress," the boy begged, "let me go with him! I am so little I can cling to his mane. After dark, they'd never see me. I will get through and carry word." But she said no. She could not let a child risk his life for so small a chance. But Gervase, entering with four soldiers, said he was to go. It was for him—and not for her—to decide.

Gervase and his men climbed the ladder to the redoubt, which looked down over the one entrance through the palisades. She touched the colt's veiny neck and the boy's blond head and turned away abruptly, fearing she might cry, for she loved Billy Bright as though he were her own.

She went to the kitchen. It was stuffed full with women and children. Goody Goad was boiling up samp and succotash. The huge pots bubbled on the hearth. A keg of brandy, as well as the usual rum, cider, and ale, had been brought up from the cellar. No one believed a man should be asked to fight cold-sober; nor should women and children huddle in fear without God's gift to cheer them.

The Selected Men, in allotting folk to the four garrisons, said in each case the "family in residence" should stay under its own roof. But at the last a whim seized Forethought Fearing. He quietly refused to stay on at Paradise and said he and his wife and child would go to the meeting-house. Jazan, harassed with the domestic arrangements of making so many people even somewhat comfortable for the night, looked at him in utter bewilderment. But solemnly he said that he was going to his "true home"—which was the meeting-house.

"And what is Paradise to me?" he added bitterly. "It has been a wicked and sensual sty for thirty-five years—a shelter for any pagan Indian. I never felt that it was my home. If I

am to die, I wish to die in God's House—and in his presence.”

Jazan could have cried with rage and exasperation. Every other man in Canaan was dressed for fighting. Jazan's gorge rose at the sight of him, so neat and clean and godly, in his best Geneva gown and snowy bands. Those delicate fingers had run no bullets and mixed no powder, never broken their nails preparing palisades. And she knew, too, that one reason he did not wish to stay in Paradise was that here Captain Gervase Blue was in charge. He could not think of the general good; only that he did not wish to take commands from the steward. There was never a thing that came to her but in some way he made it harder for her to bear.

“I love my sty,” she said. “Here I have lived, and here let me die—if that is God's will.”

And he began to talk about the horse-races, and then he said, “And will you willingly separate yourself from your husband at such a time?”

“Yes, if he will separate himself from me.”

He looked at her with tragic eyes, half begging for pity. If only he could have kissed her tenderly and wished her well. . . .

He left with a general prayer for those gathered together.

Then came another thing to upset her and take her mind off both Forethought and little Billy. Ever since they had been able to walk, Jake and Varney had loved to run about before a thunderstorm. With outstretched arms and lifted faces, they would run back and forth from Paradise to the mill—little demons, worshipping danger. And now, just before the last drum was to beat, they came racing into the kitchen of Paradise. Jazan grabbed Jake and shook him. Why wasn't he at the mill with his mother and grandparents? What did he mean by thus racing about? The child looked aggrieved. He said

his mother had sent him for the littlest of the seven porringers which hung above the kitchen hearth.

"And what for, then?"

"To feed Uncle Paul's baby."

Jazan snatched the tiny thing (no larger than a walnut shell) from its nail. With a whoop, Jake and Varney were gone. Had she done right? Should she have kept them at Paradise? Salome would have gone mad with anxiety, and as yet the scouts had reported no Indians closer than Cat Den Swamp. Half was she inclined to believe the boys were lying, and half she believed their mother had sent them for the porringer. Salome's mind worked in strange ways in emergencies.

Bathsheba had not arrived when the second drum beat. Jazan sent Phoebe to Founder's. She came back saying the hearth was cold and the woman gone. Jazan did not worry about Bathsheba, wherever she was. It would seem that she at heart did believe in the woman's "arts," in spite of all she had said in ridicule of them.

At last she sat for a moment beside Isobel. Her baby, now a yearling, was screaming and purple with rage. She did not like three other babies dumped into the cradle with her. Her mother quieted her with a lump of maple sugar.

There was a young woman, weeping over her sick child's head. It was the grandmother of this child whom Jazan had seen lying in purple gore a few weeks before, her long white hair dabbed with blood. They were common but respectable people. Jazan took the child from the mother. It was dry and hot as a chip of wood left in the sun. She lovingly tended the ailing thing and comforted the distracted mother. And at the same time she talked to Isobel, hoping to make her "a good child." Isobel was trying to push the other babies out of the cradle; but when for a moment Gervase Blue came in for a

sack of bullets and exchanged a glance with her mother, Isobel was up and crowing.

Now at last, after three more beats of the drums, the door of the palisades was shut and barricaded. A thick fog had come up from the melting snow. It seemed to rise like a dark tide of death and disaster—but with every drop that ran from the eaves, the ice swords increased. Slowly everything was encased with ice, as with fairy armour.

There was nothing to do but wait, and even the children did seem frightened into goodness. The men on the roofs reported that two buildings—and the one, it would seem, was Baileys' Acres—had been fired. They could see the orange flames. Now it was generally said that the Indians were not planning to attack the garrisons. They would be content with the mischief they could do to the abandoned farms and the goods they could steal. But at midnight, the surrounding blackness was suddenly rent with a shrieking so terrible the blood froze in the veins. The very icicles upon the eaves seemed to tremble. There was not one—not the babies in the cradle, not Gone-away, cowering under his mistress's bed, not the intrepid young commander in the redoubt—who did not feel his heart beat louder at the inhuman wail.

Bullets began to spatter against the heavy brick-lined walls and closed shutters, and there was a sound of axes chopping at the gate. The men guarding the entrance answered with a volley of shot. Then, for a moment, an appalling silence—more appalling than the united wailing of a thousand Indian throats.



13

Midnight at Colonel Coffin's

A STOUT old man paced the garrison flourishing his sword, endangering everyone with its sharp blade. And of what use is a sword when the enemy is still outside the house—no longer outside the palisades, for these had quickly fallen.

Two elm trees outside the palisade . . . two elm trees that Colonel Coffin had loved. That was why (thirty-six years ago), when he had been one of the original lot-layers for Canaan, he had selected this seemly house-stall to set his house upon.

Two elm trees of equal age, well grown and of great beauty. A hundred years old already—two hundred, perhaps. A proper approach to a gentleman's dwelling. Young Captain Blue had commanded that these trees be cut down, but the old Colonel had found ways to block the order. Young Blue had said that if the Indians swarmed the elms they could fire down into the garrison. Tonight the Indians had swarmed them, and thus easily had taken the palisades.

Lying upon their bellies in attic rooms, firing through loopholes in wooden shutters, men with ghastly faces shot once and handed back the muskets for the women behind them to load.

In the kitchen were four dead. Three men had been left behind to the Indians when the palisades had been taken.

Inside the wounded were dripping blood everywhere, and old William Williams, whom almost forty years before Mr. Parre had brought out with him from England, was dying. The great door to the east was already scarred by sharp English hatchets in the hands of the Indians. The roof had twice

been fired—and would be again, no doubt. Or next time the whole house might go.

And now it was midnight. There sat the Widow Clarey in her blue petticoat. Orde, the taverner—stout, bald, and imperturbable in his deafness. Patsy and Polly Denning, pretty things in their early teens, clung silently to each other. Patsy had been lame from birth. Now Polly promised her, by the pressure of a hand, never to desert her. Their brother, Ralph, was with Fenton Parre. They prayed for their brother Ralph to come.

The Indians were busy building an engine of war; building a fourteen-foot carriage with a barrel for a wheel; piling it with hay and flax chips, tar, and other inflammables. And when this was made and ignited and pushed against the side of the garrison . . .

But in the meantime, fire the musket and hand it back for loading. Pray for rain (a miracle from God) and help from Concord. For there was not a soul but knew this garrison was doomed.

Always Colonel Coffin's sword to watch out for.

But at last, God—who furnished neither rain nor help—did them one kindness. The old man cried out suddenly. His sword fell from his paralyzed hand, clattered to the puncheon floor. His knees gave way. He fell. And there he died—the Judge of Canaan. It was not the Indians who killed him, for, even while the air about him sang with bullets and arrows, God had sent down a private angel—and slew him, shattering him from within.

14

One o'clock at the mill

"OF *course*, Jake and Varney are all right! Of *course* they are at Paradise! Mamma, I wish you wouldn't worry so. We must trust in God. He will not desert us. And the Indians . . . really, they can be so gentle. Isn't it bad enough to have Paul lying there with an arrow in his throat? And Paul was always so kind to Indians! Mamma, please do not make up things to worry about! I know that Jake and Varney are at Paradise. Oh, Hagar, I haven't time to pray—no, not now. Paul, how do you feel? Here's cold water and a spider's web for the wound. Oh, don't ask *me* how the fight is going—but I do declare the yelling is less. No, I don't know what time is it. It seems like three days already.

"Oh, let me open that keg of powder. Cool that musket in that barrel of water, Goodman Parsons. Now, can't anyone stop for a moment and have a bit of bread and cheese? Paul dear, here's a slab of salt beef for your wound, and honey, too, mixed with beer. No, no—I'm sure 'tis no mortal wound."

But Paul only looked at her out of his staring, white-lashed eyes. He knew otherwise. Priscilla knew, too—his black-eyed, black-hearted rogue. She was fussing about a scratch in a stranger's scalp. She preferred a stranger and a little wound to a dying husband.

"Mamma, I'm sure Jake and Varney are at Paradise, and perfectly safe. I have not worried about them for one moment."



15

Four o'clock at the meeting-house

THE largest, strongest, and most central of the garrisons, the meeting-house, received some one hundred and thirty of the people. These had cried out with joy when at the last moment their minister had come to join them. The women kissed his hands. Solemnly he called upon all to pray. It was as though the Heavens had broke open and an angel of God had descended among them. But Lieutenant Seth Bailey, who was in command of this garrison, exchanged a glance with Bethuel Martin, one of the soldiers sent out from Boston. Was this impressive personage in black gown a man? Was he a help or a detriment? That curiously sexless quality in him—it might be a comfort upon Sabbath, but of what use for a fighting weekday? Both young men doubted him.

The Lord God of Battle entered into Mr. Fearing. Unused to handling weapons, he at first fulfilled the merely feminine task of loading and cooling the muskets.

Then a man dropped at his post and Fearing took up his gun. Without previous experience in fire-arms, he shot at an Indian coming over the palisade and killed him. After that, he was filled with a frenzy. He knew no fear and had no doubt. His spirit and courage carried all with him. He was like the Archangel Michael, leading the Hosts of the Lord. When, for a fourth time, the fire-arrows lighted the roof, it was Fearing who climbed to the Drummer's Walk and, making an easy target of himself against the sky, threw bucket after bucket on the flaming shingles. In the midst of flying arrows and bullets, he was unscathed.

He returned from the roof top with news of the carnage.

Yes, even as they feared—Colonel Coffin's garrison had fallen. The shrieks they had heard the last hour were not the screams of Indians but the death cries of tortured white folk.

Orde's tavern was in flames. So was the smithy and Mr. Hurlingheart's broad house. To the west, Baileys' Acres was burning. The ice-encrusted snow reflected and doubled the flames.

Young Lieutenant Bailey next essayed to venture out on to the Drummer's Walk but instantly he fell from the high roof to the ground, with an arrow through his thigh. At the same moment, the Indians broke over the palisade and made for the wounded man, who now seemed on the point of being murdered before his comrades' eyes. He was the commander, and at first no one knew what to do. To open the great barricaded door of the meeting-house—this well might let the savages in, for more and more of them were pouring over the break in the palisades.

There was no Fenton Parre among them to say coldly: Let one man die that all might live. Forethought took the authority and bade the door be opened. Armed with an axe and followed by some ten men, he threw himself into the mêlée. Forethought, in a loud voice, prayed for strength. The first savage he met fell with his skull split open.

Now the Indians saw their chance to charge against the open door. They abandoned their killing of Seth Bailey, the Younger. Those within could not fire, for they could not tell friend from enemy, but seeing the danger—too late—they began to close the door. Red arms, legs, and feet, the body of John Jackman, the cobbler's boy, blocked it. But in some way the wounded Seth Bailey had been thrust inside. Blood was spurting everywhere. Then Judith Bailey, spinster daughter of Baileys' Acres, took an axe from the palsied arms of her father

and dispassionately began to chop the arms and legs. Her dark-browed regal face showed no reflection of the ugly work she did. She might as well be chopping kindling in the woodshed at Baileys' Acres. She chopped and chopped, and at last the door was shut and bolted again. Most of the men who had, at Fearing's heels, ventured on the sortie were now once more within the garrison, and Seth Bailey had been saved. But Mr. Fearing himself was not. The bolts shot to, screaming defiance to the Indians without, and certain death to whatever white men might have failed to gain the door.

Now Judith Bailey was industriously stacking the human cord-wood she had chopped. She seemed a little tired, and one saw that she was indeed a woman of forty-odd. She bent down and threw a last remaining severed hand on the top of her bloody wood-pile. She sighed, passed a weary hand over her grizzled head, which now was streaked with blood. In a daze she looked about her.

Men's faces—white, silent, turned away. Women, kneeling for a moment in prayer.

"God grant that he is dead already."

"Never let him live to endure their tortures."

"He was like an angel come down from Heaven."

"There was a halo of light about his head. . . ."

"God grant he's dead already!"

"Amen. . . ."

"Amen—to that."

Judith had been too much concerned with her own work to have thought of other matters. "Of whom do you speak?" she asked.

"Of Mr. Fearing. They have taken him."

16

Paradise at sunrise

BUT how may we know that it is sunrise? It is black night in here with all the windows shuttered. God, to breathe fresh air once more after such a night!

But they say it is break o' day. . . . Well, we have lived through this . . . we have lived through this.

And all the garrisons held fast, except Colonel Coffin's. His head thrown over our palisades. How he and Father always fought . . . and this, the end of him! His head thrown into our barn-yard—and the fire still blazing where his house stood.

God, that I should have lived to such a day! Oh, God have pity!

Jazan was almost glad that Forethought had not stayed on at Paradise. She was sure that in such dire straits he would have forgotten his manhood; proved cowed and abject. She had no confidence in his virility. She was glad, now that she was sure he was safe (for the meeting-house had held), that she had not witnessed his weakness. Of course he had not fought. How could he fight?

It was light enough outside so that the men on watch could make out arms and legs, heads and bodies of the white men taken at Coffin's garrison and thrown over the palisades; and she heard excited voices calling back and forth that one recognized the Widow Clarey's blue petticoat—another, the red hair of Orde's pot-boy.

But with the coming of dawn the fighting had mysteriously ceased. Numbly, she went on stirring great iron pots of gruel and stew, for people must eat—especially babies and children must eat.

A shout went up for Gervase Blue.

"Hey, Captain—they've got a white flag stuck up above the palisades. They want parley!"

For a little, it was discussed whether or not this might be some trick of the Indians; but Gervase settled the matter for himself. He would accept parley. In his heart he hoped to make some terms with the Indians for the captives they doubtless had taken. He had not told Jazan. No one had told her. But the Indians had been yelling that the white God-man had fallen into their hands.

So at last the kitchen door was unbolted, and Gervase walked alone and unarmed, slipping across the icy crust to the palisades. Through this wall of upright tree trunks, he conferred with the enemy he could not see. They had (boasted a sing-song voice in halting English, beyond the palisades) taken all the other garrisons except only this. And because of the valour shown by these men at Paradise, they had no wish to take it—for these men were their brothers. Concord and Watertown had fallen to them. There was little left now but Boston only, and soon this would fall. So the voice went on, telling lies. . . . Everywhere the Indians had been victorious. But these people they had no wish to slay, for in days past Paradise had been kind to Indians and this they remembered. The speaker implied they had never made more than a half-hearted attempt to take this garrison.

Gervase Blue listened to the voice. Here was the heart of the parley. The Indians were running short of munitions (Gervase had noted how many more arrows than bullets were shot the last three hours of the fighting). Let the people of Paradise but give them a store of these things and they would promise friendship with them and with their children, forever and ever.

"Englishman, you doubt we speak true? You doubt Concord and Watertown have fallen to us? You doubt we are a thousand strong—and that we stay here and starve you out? But here is one you believe, and he counsel you surrender and become our brothers. Go back to your house door and listen to this speech."

Gervase, who thus far had said no word, went back to the house door and there he stood. He saw, and all the watchers within saw, the figure of a man thrust up until first his head and then his whole body as far as his waist was exhibited to the people of the garrison. Gervase stood a few feet from the kitchen door. For a second he thought the man thus thrust up into the light, which was now striking long and level over the ice-encrusted world, was only a corpse. The face was grey and drawn and looked carved out of a mottled soap. The eyes started in their sockets. And yet in these dire straits and full of courage, Forethought Fearing gazed at Paradise, so shuttered, barred, and battered.

No face could he see but only the hated steward. He guessed how many of his flock were staring out at him. Blind, the dark house looked, in the first dazzle of the sun through the ice storm. He saw the great icicles hanging from the eaves—like the swords of the archangels guarding the house. This had been his home. Here had he lived for six years with the woman he had married. And she had borne him a daughter, whom she called "Lambkin." He and his wife at Paradise. . . . And suddenly it seemed to him a very Paradise, and he could not seem to think why he had not been happier there. This Paradise—small-eyed, black, and scowling—how staunchly it had sheltered and protected its own! It was as if for the first time he saw the soul of the old house, and he

felt a blind love for it—a longing to be back once more. He loved everyone within the house.

The speech he had promised King Philip—never once had he expected to deliver that treacherous speech . . . a speech that might save him his life. He said to himself, God, my life is not theirs—my life is thine. Into thy hands . . . So the grey and mottled face stared dumbly at the house. They had rehearsed him well in that speech. . . .

But only one person could he see, and that was, by some trick of fate, the steward, Gervase Blue, in a blood-stained jerkin, a steel helmet on his head. He stood with his back to the door, and on each side of him hung gigantic ice-swords from the eaves. Forethought wished he might make his speech to Jazan . . . to her. . . . But he knew that she was within, watching and listening.

“Help comes from Concord. . . . Tom Pigge got through to Fenton Parre. They know they are beaten. God bless you all! God keep you. . . .”

And miraculously as he had appeared, he was dragged down from sight. Instantly an arrow pierced Gervase’s jerkin, searing the upper arm. He jumped back into safety, slipping on the icy threshold.

Forethought Fearing was gone.

I7

EVERY smallest twig encased in ice; the field covered with glittering white lacquer; trees bent to earth under the heavy load, white birches bowing in icy shrouds; ice upon the roofs; icicles from the eaves. It was like the world of the fairy, a world of crystal twinkling white—a kingdom of arctic elves

and gnomes. And upon this fantastic world, the sun rose at last.

In dull amazement, the besieged in the three remaining garrisons looked out. The Indians had not been seen for an hour. Was the attack withdrawn, or were the enemy still lurking in ambush? Folk listened in fear to small unusual sounds: the tinkling ice falling from the trees, the cracking of twigs and branches giving way under the weight upon them. A secret twisting and groaning from the heart of trees—and then, horses' hooves breaking the icy crust, men's voices, and the rattle of weapons.

As soon as word had come to Boston of the depredations at Lancaster, Captain Parre and his sixty dragoons had been ordered in pursuit. Only as far as Concord had they got when Tom Pigge, spent and incoherent, made his sensational arrival. Instantly Fenton's men had been routed out of the inn yard where they slept. In ten minutes they were in the saddle, and through the ice-encrusted darkness they took the road to Canaan. Indians they had met, but Fenton saw that already these were in retreat. Only one had they time to kill, and that was Samuel Bull—the "praying Indian" Forethought had chosen to be the tithingman of Swamp Town. Fenton took from his belt a bloody scalp with a respectable bald spot in the middle, which he believed he recognized as Mr. Orde's. Through Cat Den Swamp and over the Great Commons they passed at a gallop. Once the road was blocked. A slender fox-coloured horse lay across it, with an arrow in its breast and blood and foam upon its mouth. Beside him, with upturned face and twisted lips, was Billy Bright. No one could see what had killed the boy. There was no mark of death upon him—but here he had died.

As Great Commons dipped down to the Catacoonamaug

Fenton could see, to his right, Founder's House—alive and whole—and the unbroken palisades about Paradise. He noted that smoke was rising in safe, homely fashion from the stacked stone chimneys, but he saw before him, over the Goose Common, a pall of smoke. The horses' hooves thundered on the town bridge, and in a moment he was in the centre of Canaan.

Here such a sight met their eyes, the men involuntarily stopped their horses. Nothing was left of the orderly heart of the village but the meeting-house only. Orde's tavern—it was a smouldering cellar hole; only the chimney still stood as a gravestone above it. Preserved English's house and smithy. . . . He did not blame his lieutenant, Mercuricus English, for his oaths of vengeance. Mr. Hurlingheart's broad and shabby residence—nothing but a chimney. The parsonage was gone; the Denning house; William Williams's. He counted eighteen chimneys. The meeting-house—thank God that still stood! But the savages had made a breach to the north.

To make the sight more appalling, Nature took no part in the horror. Twinkling and white, the glittering ice by its beauty made the whole thing seem meaningless.

At the head of the Common, a little down the Sudbury road, ever since he could remember, Colonel Coffin's mansion had stood, with two fine elms in front. The elms were still there. Colonel Coffin had loved his elms. . . . They were spared, and nothing else. Here the reek of burning flesh was nauseous. Seventy people, men, women, and children, had sought asylum here. It would seem that not one lived to tell the tale . . . but bodies hacked to pieces, bowels slithering out like snakes; arms, legs, and heads. . . . It seemed there were enough members lying about to make a hundred men.

Under an ice-bowed rose-bush he found the scalpless body of Orde. Yet in some way a number had managed to escape

alive—less than thirty had been slain. The living crept out from the bushes that had sheltered them, to stare silently at their rescuers.

Fenton went to the meeting-house, and folk came streaming out, blinking in the glare of sun upon ice. In a jumble, they told their story—something about an archangel and Mr. Fearing.

"Seth Bailey, Bethuel Martin, John Goldwood, John Linkhorn, Rejoice Poole—all you young men still able to bear arms, find horses for yourselves and meet me in half an hour on the Goose Common. I and my men, we go after them."

They wished to point out to him the naked painted bodies of the Indians scattered about. He had no time to look. Judith Bailey had a bloody axe in her hands. Never before could he remember having seen a smile on that malignant spinster face.

He went to Paradise.

Now, the people at the mill and the people at Paradise had dared make the short walk between the two garrisons, the men with muskets in their hands, the women clutching their babies, their children hanging upon their skirts. And the first face Fenton saw was his brother's wife; like a clam shell, white and frozen, this face floated towards him through the multitude of distracted women.

"It must be some mistake, Fenton." She was smiling horribly and hopefully, and joggling Paul Blue's baby in her arms. "Of *course*, Jake and Varney are safe at Paradise. Of course they are safe!"

Gervase Blue stood beside his stirrup. Of the night before he had nothing to say. But the horses, he said, had mostly been turned loose on the Great Commons across the river. He bade Hosea Framingham see how many could be rounded up. People were doing strange and useless things. Judith

Bailey, for instance, had walked over from the meeting-house carrying an axe, and she had gone to work on a slain Indian's body, chopping it up like so much fire-wood. The green paint on the naked carcass came off on her hands. She looked up and smiled again at Fenton. When she had chopped up one Indian she went on to the next; nor did she show frenzy in her work, only the concentration of a good housewife. No one heeded her.

Jazan was sensible. She went with Gervase and Hosea to help drive in the straying horses. She had but one word to him: "Forethought. . . ." And he had kissed her and nodded.

"I will do what I can. . . ." It was all he could promise.

Some captives had been taken: Jake and Varney Parre, Forethought Fearing, and probably Patsy and Polly Denning, who had been in the Coffin garrison. They were nowhere about. Fenton hated to think of these two young girls.

Leaving most of his men to beat the neighbouring woods for wounded Indians, he went over to Four 'er's to see how Gervase was making out with the horses. Twenty or thirty of them had been driven up to Bathsheba's hut.

"Look, Fenton!" cried Jazan.

She held by his white forelock a gaunt dappled stallion. His hide hung from hip to hip. The ribs stood out. The once round neck was reduced to cords and loose skin. On his back was tied an Indian blanket.

"So you have come back, old Tobey!" And he fondled his ears.

The horse paid no attention to his master; but when Fenton turned to go into Founder's (which he had been told was empty), Tobey followed him with hanging head—in the creature's eyes that same look of dumb pleading he remembered

in the eyes of Priam, the Mendon boy he had been unable to save from the Indians.

Fenton shook the barred door, and it opened immediately to him. Bathsheba—grown somewhat stout, but neat enough—stood on the threshold, bidding him enter. There was a slight, flurried formality in her manner; not surprising, considering their old relationship, but very strange at such a moment.

"I knew some time you would come back, Fenton."

"Were you here all last night, Bathsheba?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did not the Indians molest you?"

"No, they were courteous. If only everyone had stayed in his own house, he would have been as safe as I."

"But were you not afraid?"

"They were most hideously decked out: naked and painted, and their heads shaven, except for a cock's-comb stiffened with wax. You remember those Tarratines you brought home with you once?"

"But what did you do?"

"I simply explained to them that if they killed me, I would pursue them in my wolf shape."

"Did they, then, know English?"

"Oh, no," she said, laughing girlishly. "But they understood about the wolf shape." She pointed to the old rug before her hearth. "I got under that."

"So this frightened them?"

"No—but they were very polite. They thanked me for the food they took."

"Look you now—this is important to me. Did you gather any names of chiefs?"

"King Philip. He sat here an hour with me. He told me

about his sister-in-law, a very superior woman according to him, and his son. He said . . .”

“Now that is a lie. Philip does not speak English. I can believe readily enough that he avoided the fight—he’s no hero. Why did you think it was Philip?”

She answered him with exhausted patience: “I saw his crippled hand. Canonchet, he came in for a moment. It was he who took Colonel Coffin’s head. It seems when they broke in they found him already dead, and no wound upon him.”

Fenton knew that no one could have told her of the old Judge’s death. He said, “How know you it was Canonchet?”

“He flashed like a sword.” She had chosen perfect words to describe this valiant young sagamore of the Narragansetts.

“Samuel Bull of Swamp Town, he was here. I did not know him, but King Philip introduced us. He speaks our tongue.”

“And Totonic?”

“He would not come to fight at Canaan.”

He left her. Never had he heard such a tale! She made the frightful attack sound more like a London rout: “King Philip introduced us!” The wonder was King Philip did not brain her. The savages had been “very polite.” It sounded as though she had dropped her knitting and they had picked it up!

Mercuricus English, his lieutenant, was calling him, and with his sword clanking, he went out. The horses were tied in a picket line, and saddles and bridles were found for them. In a few minutes they could take up pursuit. Mercuricus English led him behind the pig-pen. There lay the two Denning girls. Doubtless the Indians had not realized that Patsy was lame until they reached this spot. Her they had killed with one blow of the hatchet. Her older sister, Polly . . . How had they, at such a moment, found time for such infernal tricks? Her scalp was half torn off—the fingers of her left hand

hacked away. Her pretty snub nose was split. Yes, as usual in such cases, those were bowels streaming from her belly. Ralph Denning, who was in his own troop, stood beside Fenton—his heavy shoulders shaking, his chest clutching in sobs.

"It will kill my mother, Captain Parre. And last time I saw Polly she was asking me how the Indians torture prisoners!"

"Come on, Ralph—we'll certainly catch up with some of this band. Perhaps we can take enough of their stragglers alive to induce them to exchange those of ours they have with them."

Then the young trooper began to cry in earnest. "We can never get enough to exchange for Patsy and Polly."

Fenton was sorry for him but disgusted with his childish bawling. Bold Ralph Denning, gone to pieces like a girl!

He had noticed one odd thing in this attack upon Canaan. It had produced three acts of stout courage—and none of these deeds had been performed by heroes. Tom Pigge had got through to Concord; Bathsheba spent a night alone with the murderous savages; Forethought Fearing had played better than a man's part. The three most unlikely candidates for heroic action he could think of.

"In God's name, buckle up your belt and put your helmet on your head. If you can't get your tail out from between your legs, I'll leave you here at Canaan."

And he called to his ensign, Peter Fairchild, to blow upon his trumpet the signal to mount.

18

THE time for ploughing and planting had come, but of the three hundred who had formerly lived at Canaan twenty-two remained. The others had fled to the seaport towns. They

might live in exile and poverty, but they hoped to be spared another such murderous attack as they had endured during the February ice. Canaan was formally abandoned. It was impossible now to grant soldiers for her protection. But when the Governor heard that a handful of these stiff-necked people remained (determined to plant their land and tend their flocks), he asked God's blessing upon them. Thousands of cultivated acres along the Connecticut, the Nashaway, the Asabet, the Merrimac, and the Blackstone this year would go unplanted. If a few men upon the Catacoonamaug had the courage to remain and plant, they would help prevent the starvation which threatened. So the Governor gave orders that none of these bold farmers should be impressed to arms, blessed them—and tried to forget them.

The Blue mill (deserted of all the Blues) and Paradise were joined together by a palisade. Between it and the river, every night, the few animals which remained were held in comparative safety. At the two garrisons lived twenty-one of the remaining twenty-two. The only one who refused this shelter was Bathsheba, and she lived as she had for years, in her hut across the river. At the mill, Judith Bailey was mistress, and at Paradise, Jazan Fearing, each feeding and clothing the men of the household. These women worked from sun-up to hours after sundown. But Judith was used to this drudgery. It was something of a vacation to be relieved for once of her uncle and father. After the burning of Baileys' Acres, the old men had proved more timid than avaricious. They had removed to Ipswich. Judith, a spinster of forty-six, was intended by nature to be a handsome woman. For the first time in her life, after the departure of her father and uncle, she began to take some interest in her appearance. Jazan gave her an old crimson murrey dress of Agnes's. It was

stained and shabby, but the finest dress this daughter of a wealthy yeoman had ever possessed. On the strength of it, she took a bath for the first time in twenty years. Her hair, now streaked with white, began to look less screwed back on her handsome head. For the first time in forty years, she found time to clean her nails. To feed and clothe the nine men assigned to her care seemed nothing to her, for she worked with machine-like perfection.

It was different with the delicately reared Jazan. She was up in the dark to start the kitchen fire for breakfast. By noon, the tremendous dinner which the farmers expected must be prepared, and hardly were the trenchers washed before she must begin on supper. Besides, there were the clothes to wash; soap and candles to make; ale to brew; bread to bake; the house to clean; calves, hens, pigs to feed; stockings to knit and darn; butter to churn. At night she was so tired she sometimes did not take off her clothes, but flung herself down upon her bed as she was. There was no time in this hard new life to worry or repine. Nothing was left but work. She had elected to stay—but she sent Phoebe and baby Isobel to the Fayr-weather's in Boston. She knew that no matter how hard she worked, Gervase and his men worked harder. There was a contentment in her life she had not known for many years.

Goody Goad never would have left Paradise, but to her grave only. This opened for her early in March. In the grave with her were buried a boy and a girl, found in the woods towards Sudbury, scalped and mutilated. No one ever knew who these children might be, but it seemed a kindness to these little lost souls to lay them in the grave with the old woman. So all three were buried together in the Parre burial lot.

One day in June Gervase asked Jazan to pack the dinner

in baskets. The farmers would not be home this noon. She was up earlier than usual to get their food ready for them, but after they were gone and she knew they would not be back until nightfall, she felt a respite. For a few hours, her time would be her own. The war, people said, was coming to an end—the hungry Indians had been quarrelling among themselves. No hostile warriors had been seen about Canaan for months. She decided to go abroad for a little way. Actually, she had not had time to go as far as the Goose Common in the last three months. Gone-away, fat, fluffy, and very old, met his mistress in the yard, stretched himself, and offered to go with her. She walked outside the palisade towards the mill and Gone-away limped beside her. There to her left, upon a little hillock, was the deserted Abraham Blue house. She decided to go in. On the ground floor were but two meagre rooms. She saw a dress of Hagar's hanging upon a hook by the bed. In the kitchen everything was little and orderly. From the kitchen a ladder led upwards to Forethought's beloved prayer-chamber.

Every day since he had gone, Jazan had prayed for her husband—that some word might come from him. Better to hear that he was dead than always to be imagining what his sufferings might be. She stood and stared at the ladder. Never “in his lifetime,” she started to say to herself, had she entered his prayer-chamber. Today, she would.

The attic room was plain: a pallet of straw in one corner, a clean white pine table, one chair (also home-made, probably by Abraham), a metal foot warmer, a shelf for books—and that was all. The roof cut the room into the shape of a tent. She sat down wearily at the table. She thought of him as he had been that day of the branding. She remembered the days when she had nursed him through fever: the delicacy of his

skin, the weakness of that sick body, and how he had cried out to her as his "good angel." How could he, of all men, endure the horrors of Indian captivity?

Here she felt closer to him than ever she could at Paradise. He had loved this room and hated Paradise. Here, finally, he had removed all his favourite books and most personal papers: the pious journals that he had kept almost from infancy, certain sermons of his father's. On top of the bookshelf she spied what at first she thought was a small animal. It was a beaver muff. She began to laugh—but she wanted to cry. That muff . . .

Old men, especially old city men, carried muffs on cold days, but when, the first winter of marriage, Forethought had produced this muff and said he must walk over (in spite of the venomous cold) to consult with Deacon Noah Bailey, she had not been able to help herself and she had laughed at his muff. She knew that his blood ran thinly in his veins, that he felt the cold bitterly; but she had not been able to bear the sight of him, standing so priggishly before her, with that small beaver muff. From that day to this, she had never seen it. He must have had some affection for it, for he had bothered to remove it some time, without her knowledge, to this secret hiding-place. Perhaps it belonged to his father. She took it up. It was alive with moths and scummed over with their spinning. The fur fell out in handfuls. In disgust, she set it down and went back to the table.

There was a little red leather box before her and idly she opened it. Inside was a topaz heart her father had given her shortly before his death. She had loved it dearly, and it was Forethought (in his courting days) who had said how when she had it on her brown eyes took the exact colour of the stone; but under Hagar's influence he had come to feel so

strongly against rich apparel, she had finally promised to wear it no more. He himself had taken it from her neck.

"If sold," he said, "it would buy a dozen of Mr. Eliot's Bibles for the Indians."

She supposed he had sold it. Now it twinkled in her work-stained hands. Strangely, it must have been that he loved it. He had taken nothing to his prayer-chamber but the things he had loved.

Sitting thus at the dusty table where he had so often worked, she could enter so far into his soul as to feel almost that she was he, and she began to understand things about him she had never known before. She could almost hear Hagar tiptoeing about in the kitchen below, or perhaps praying to God to strengthen him. (Hagar and Abraham had both sought asylum in Boston.) She had always been there, giving him support, believing in him. This support, his sensitive nature craved. Yet to everything his life stood for Jazan could not—*could not*—be anything but opposed. Nor had she the dishonesty to pretend otherwise. Thus had she inadvertently betrayed him. She had often pitied herself in the last years, but until now she had never pitied him. Now she did. She pitied him that ever he had married her. Hagar had been right—Jazan had been a load upon his Fearing soul. Oh, but once he had been free! Once and for a little while, he had not been only one more Fearing. Once, she felt, he had been himself. Then blackness had come down on him, and there had been no place for her and a great need of escape from Paradise and from her; a need for a prayer-chamber—Hagar.

Sitting thus in Forethought's chair, she wondered quietly about her husband and her sister. Had they, then, been in love? You might call it love, and you might not. At least there had been mutual respect, admiration, sympathy. Each had

shared with the other one the most sacred part of life. But to neither was the most sacred part of life the part that other men call "love." If it had been, perhaps the relationship between them would have been destroyed, as it had been between herself and Forethought. No—it had not been exactly "love" that Forethought had craved from woman.

Jazan had been jealous, a little, at first; then cynical and sneering toward the relationship. But why should she be? She was not any more. She understood and wished—now that it was too late—she might have understood years ago, as she now did.

As she came back to Paradise with Gone-away wheezing behind her, Jazan realized that something was not right. The dog told her plainly that someone had been about. Perhaps it was one of the workmen who had come back for a tool and left the heavy door in the palisade open. But her heart beat hard. The dog, whining, circled about, then followed her to the kitchen. Since so many strangers had come to live at Paradise, all the liquor except ale and cider only had been kept locked away in the kitchen cupboard. This had been broken into. She saw that four firkins of brandy were gone. Once more Gone-away said plainly that someone had come in their absence. She went outdoors and, after searching in the mud before the gate in the palisade, found the footprint of a small moccasin. She was sure it was Totonic who had come back, craved the brandy, and stolen it. But Totonic did not steal and Totonic was far away, for with her lips she had refused to believe those stories that more and more frequently came to Canaan, that Totonic had been seen in several of the Indian fights. At least in words, she had refused to believe—but in her heart she knew the truth. And she knew that Totonic would steal brandy.

When the men came, although she told them of the moccasin she said she did not doubt that it was one of the wretches from Cedar Fort. A group went down to the swamp and came back with the report that not a child or woman was left. All had gone, and that right recently. Were they to follow after or let them go? Captain Blue, who settled all matters for them, said they were to be allowed to go.

As much town government as they now had rested upon Gervase Blue, whom they had voted to be their "constable." There was no other local officer among them; neither minister, nor judge, nor selectmen—but "constable" only. What little remained of Canaan, he ruled.

19

THE very day it was discovered that the few miserable Indians of Swamp Town had fled, Captain Parre with his sixty men turned from the ruins of Sudbury and took the Canaan road. He had hoped at Sudbury to find forge and smithy. The horses needed shoeing, and the men's armour and weapons repairing. But Sudbury had been abandoned. The troop had been to the Falls of the Connecticut, fighting there against King Philip himself. Many Wampanoags had they killed, but the crafty (and possibly timid) king had escaped the massed white men—as usual. It was this Philip who had started the war, and both white men and red had a superstitious feeling that when he died it would be over.

The mortality among Fenton's men had been high. That pirate he had taken from the gaol in Boston (thus giving his troop from the beginning a somewhat sinister reputation), Willy Titmouse, had died in a swamp at Chelmsford. A better death than hanging on Boston Common.

Mercuricus English—it had been a blow to lose this old friend and able lieutenant, who had for a year borne a charmed life. Dead, he was now. Dead as a door-nail! And the hairy, wiry young smith had been killed by a woman at that. Close by the Falls of the Connecticut, the troop had stopped to camp on a bare hill. They had that day picked up some of the squaws and children, abandoned by the faster travelling warriors. They seemed harmless folk. But in some way an ancient hag had gotten a horse pistol. She had no idea what to do with it and had neither bullet sack nor powder-horn, and the men had laughed to see her with it; laughed until they had rolled on the ground. Then Mercuricus, with tears running down his cheeks, had gone to her. "Old dame, give it to me. . . ." Incredibly, she had raised it and struck him a death blow on the temple. As foolishly as that had Mercuricus English died.

Ralph Denning had taken English's place, and now rode beside the Captain. Two by two, the men rode behind—looking what they were, hardy and tried troopers. Under their black helmets the expression of their faces seemed to a casual observer much alike: all gaunt, all square-jawed, all brave, aggressive. But their captain knew each man: how Ralph Denning could cry like a baby, how Hardship Whittaker (a fur trader, as he himself had once been) hated the Indians with such fury he would practise their own tortures on captives if he was not held in check. And he knew that the young man who drove the pack-horses and managed the commissary and cooked the food, in spite of his warlike appearance, was all that was left of his erstwhile partner and brother-in-law, Jonathan Fayrweather. His own wife would not have recognized him.

Jonathan had asked three times to be taken into his troop.

But Fenton, who had often seen him in peace times drilling on Boston Common with the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, had laughed at him and refused his offer. At last he had assented, but he would not enrol him for the duration of the war, as his other men were enrolled.

"You can try it for a month, Johnny, but I promise you you will not like it. There's hardly a gentleman in my troop. I picked them for their toughness. Bad men in times of peace, but good for war. And your thighs are not the shape of a horse's back, and the base of your breast-plate will certainly chafe your paunch. . . . Well, come out with us if you are so determined."

Soft with his natural indolence and easy merchant's life, the first month had needed all the man's determination; but his thighs began to take the shape of the horse's back and his fat melted off him. Fenton had put him in charge of supplies, but he had not expected the wealthy gentleman to descend to stirring the stewpot himself. This Jonathan did. He had lived for three months in the troop, almost as a servant to men who were better marksmen, better swordsmen than himself—but surely no more valiant or determined. Agnes will not recognize her roly-poly when I bring him home to her, thought Fenton. But if I know him, it will take but three months of peace to put on again all the lard we have tried out of him.

The road from Sudbury to Canaan had been little used by carts this last year. All the way, Fenton knew, it ran through dense forest. Patrick Paw, a Mohican (for his people had sided with the white men in this war), was the pilot for the troop. Fenton sent him ahead and on foot to spy out the way. And the heavily armed, mounted men came afterwards, two by two. It was close to nightfall. Fenton was thinking of

making camp and feeding the tired men when they should come to an open spot he knew of where fresh water and firewood were plentiful. There were four wounded among them.

They had been but a mile and little more, when Pat Paw came circling back. Down the pathway, coming toward them, he had spied a small party of Nipmuc squaws and children. Fenton ordered ten of his men to dismount, and advancing cautiously, they formed an ambush. Many and many of these stragglers had he picked up before and herded into Boston. There they were segregated upon one of the islands, where Christopher Parre had begged permission to live with them. All of these folk feared the islands, and it was true that they were not properly fed. But what else to do? Food was scarce everywhere, and they were better off than thus pitifully starving to death in the forest.

After a minute came a straggling band of silent and heavily laden squaws with great burdens upon their bowed backs . . . a group of some dozen only. He let them pass—that line of broad and labouring backs; no one speaking, the heads straining against the bands across the foreheads that carried much of the weight of the loads. Like mud-turtles, they crawled along. Women, the weary burden bearers of the world. Men at least got some pleasure from their fighting. But what do these find to enjoy? And what was true of these unfortunate women was equally true of Star in Boston or his Jazan, working herself to death at Paradise.

As they were about to pass him, he stepped from his hiding and said, "Clara-Wood-Tree."

Although it was growing dark he had recognized her waddle. Then in all directions the creatures scattered, flinging their burdens from them. Only old Clara stood stupidly before him with her leathern pack at her feet. In a few moments the

soldiers had rounded up the others, who came as bidden, docilely and without speaking.

"Why did you leave Swamp Town?" Fenton clucked in Algonquin. "You know that to move more than a mile from your domicile is forbidden you. There is no choice now but I take you all to Boston."

"Captain," broke in Ralph Denning, "ask them of Totonic."

Several of the men in the troop were from about Canaan, Chelmsford, and Sudbury and knew some of these women and their sachem by sight. The women muttered and shook their heads. Totonic? It was over a year since they had heard from him. He was north with his young men.

Hardship Whittaker laughed. "We have already killed five or six of these great 'hunters,' and we'll get that traitorous King Pint Pot yet."

Johnny was crying. She had Mercy in her arms. She might be as squat and taciturn as any squaw, she might take great pride in her adopted people—but put her in a pinch, and she was merely white, after all.

Fenton ordered camp to be made, fires to be built; told Jonathan he wanted a good supper cooked "for our friends."

Still Pat Paw circled through the woods, casting about like a hunting-dog after a scent. He alone had had sharp enough eyes to realize that there had been eleven women and children, and only ten had been found. He set up a slight howl, and Fenton ran to him. Here was the one he sought, cleverly hidden in a dense pine thicket. It was dark in the woods—but Fenton saw and knew. Thus, shamefully disguised as a woman, Fenton again met Totonic. The last time he had seen him was the morning after the great council by the Quabog.

Pat Paw did not recognize him, nor did any of the soldiers

who came crowding up to look over the new captive—not even Dick Blue who had often gone trading with him.

"This is no Swamp Town squaw," Denning announced confidently.

"She is not," said Captain Parre slowly—and his men noticed his face looked tight and hard. "Her will I question."

He bade the men start another camp-fire for him, a little way apart. "We are met at last, old friend," he murmured in Algonquin; but Totonic, fearing his voice would betray him, did not answer. When they came back to the rest of the captives, Johnny's sobs rose to an hysterical wail. She screamed invectives and abuse upon Fenton; but when Whittaker struck her and told her to keep her dirty clap shut, Fenton said no—she was to curse him if it pleased her. He gave her his own riding-cape to cover her and her little daughter—who only, of Totonic's five children, yet lived. But even while she cursed Fenton she watched him, as though begging a favour. She begged an impossible thing: the life of her husband. There was no choice. The man must die.

20

NIGHT came down quickly, and three sentinels were set. The other soldiers and the women and children lay down to sleep, but the Captain and the strange woman sat apart by their own fire. Beds of fir had been made them, but Totonic was so deep sunk in despair he was unconscious of what happened about him. At last, when they were alone, the white man said, "Now we may talk together, using your tongue."

"I have nothing to say."

So they were silent for a while.

"Is it true that you never went north, but have been fighting the white men ever since the uprising?"

"It is true."

Fenton took a pipe from his wallet, filled it, lit it at the fire, offered it to Totonic. He would not smoke, and Fenton smoked alone.

"But I did not fight to the east at first. I and my men fought along the Connecticut. Nor did I fight against the men you led. Twice and thrice I turned back rather than fight with you."

"To the west the war is over, and in one way the Indians have won, for you've burned our towns. Yet in a way *we* have won, for you starve and we do not. Now you come east?"

"Yes, but here I do not wish to fight. Hereabouts are my friends."

"You know Boston has set a price upon your head?"

"Johnny told me. I hardly know why. I have not killed anyone about Boston."

"But to kill a white man on the Connecticut is the same as to kill one in Boston. You came back to get your women?"

"What remains of them. Fenton, when I went away—I and my young men—we left over eighty folk behind. Where are they gone? I do not know. My eldest son was murdered. Two of my daughters and my little lad died. The old folk, they are all gone—except Clara only. Some wandered away to starve by themselves. Sickness overtook many. But of my tribe, what remains? My young men are slain mostly, and of the others there are but a few women and children. We were five hundred folk when I was a lad; but in my father Chicken-Chuck's day, we were a thousand. And I heard that even these few left at Swamp Town were to be sent to Deer Island, and

there, they say, they are beaten and starved . . . and their flesh sold in Boston for dog meat."

"These are lies."

"I could not rest, thinking of my women. I have friends among the Tarratines, sachems you and I have traded with. I would have taken my women to join with them. But by bad fortune I failed. 'Twas bad fortune to meet with you again."

"What am I to do with you? If I let you join the Tarratines you will go on with your slaughterings and destruction."

Totonic looked him in the face. "I will carry on warfare against the white men as long as ever I live. So I know, now I must die."

After a while, he said, "Johnny . . . you must stand by her. Only the girl, Mercy, still lives."

Fenton said nothing.

"For myself I have no concern. You will slay me tonight if you are merciful; if not, you will send me to Boston, and they will hang me there. It is all over, and I have finished. But Johnny . . . she is a white woman, and it will go hard with her."

"What I can do for her, and for Mercy, I will do."

After a while Fenton thought Totonic had dropped to sleep. He lay curled up on the fir boughs, breathing deeply. Then he saw his eyes were open and fastened upon the tree-tops. He guessed that he had spent the time communing with his gods, begging them to make place for him in the next world, for with this world he was finished. At last, after midnight, Totonic roused himself and said:

"A little more than a year ago I saved your life, Fenton Parre. Now I claim recompense. I do not wish to be sent to Boston. It was to protect you I went to the great council at Quabog. I knew that if you went alone they would surely

have slain you, so I went with you—that I might lay claim upon you as my personal prisoner, else would you have been hacked to pieces.”

“I have often thought of that.”

“If you had not forced me to go with you, I should have done as I said: gone north until the war was over. But after I had got to Quabog I had no choice. I had to ally myself with King Philip and Sagamore John. I had no choice.”

“This, too, I have known.”

“I do not ask that you set me loose once more. I have no heart to begin life anew among strange people and in a strange land. I saw an omen as I started back to Swamp Town, and I knew that the trail my feet were set upon would lead me to death. I submit to fate.” There was another long pause. “I saw it all clearly, long ago. The Indians and the white men cannot live together. One or the other must go. And we have done our best.”

“The Indians are beaten—even if they have destroyed most of our towns.”

“We starve. We took our chance, that our children need not be slaves.”

Fenton had a knife in his hand. He toyed with it.

Totonic said, “Take your knife, Fenton, and stick it between my collar-bone and neck.”

“No—I cannot.” And he put his knife back in its sheath.

“I will spring at you, and your men will come and club me to death.”

“Go to sleep, Totonic—it is better so.”

“Will you give me a drink of brandy?”

Fenton gave him the leathern bottle he carried on his thigh. He could hear the contents gurgle as the liquor poured down the man’s throat; then satisfied belchings and a sigh of con-

tent. Totonic began to sing in a small wavering voice. In this, his death song, he boasted of how he had fought twice at Deerfield and thrice at Hadley. He had slain six warriors at Bloody Brook. And there never had been so great and bold a man as he. So he went on with his mournful boasting, which among the Indians is a death lament. Fenton left him for a moment to his song. When he came back he had two more leathern bottles of brandy.

At sunrise it was found that Totonic was too drunk to walk or talk or sit a horse. He could only lie upon the ground, vomit, and groan. Then Captain Parre ordered all of his men but three only to break camp and start on the way to Canaan, guarding the women and children. Now that the sachem lay before them in daylight base and degraded, he was quickly recognized. Yet Fenton himself could hardly believe that this sodden mask was the sensitive face of his milk-brother.

Johnny was shaking and clutching the tearless Mercy to her, but when she was ordered to march she did. She did not know it was Agnes Parre's husband who so courteously offered to carry her child for her on his saddle-bow. She left her husband lying on the ground with the four towering, heavily armed white men gathered about him.

There were several pack animals with the troop, and the soldiers would have liked to shift the load and add this King Pint Pot. He was no great burden. They wished the glory of bringing in the proscribed sachem alive. What a holiday for the people in Boston!

"And he shall be hanged in the woman's garments he put on himself. 'Tis a white woman's dress, probably stolen."

Fenton, now that it was light, saw the dirty, torn gown was indeed the very one he had once given to Totonic for his wife, Johnny. Clearly he could remember how Totonic had

traced for him the flight of Bathsheba and Kit as far west as the Blackstone. He had come back to Founder's House, and he had also told him of the son Johnny had borne him. Then Fenton had taken a dress from Bathsheba's chest and given it to him. It was the one she had had on the first time ever he looked upon her. In this dress (once a delicate peach colour) she had lain like a mermaid, waiting for him to come. "Fair as Helen of Troy" . . . and that was eleven years ago, and no one was as young as once. At the sight of the sumptuous silk dress thus lying befouled and torn, nostalgia rose in him, and he, who was usually quick and assured in his ordering, hesitated. The men, hoping he had agreed to take Totonic to Boston, began binding his arms and legs.

"Wait—there is no need for that. He dies here." Looking at the three men left with him, he said quietly: "Who among you is base enough to kill a helpless, unconscious man?"

And his sharp hazel eyes fell upon Hardship Whittaker, a man who had twice been flogged for his fiendish cruelty to the Indians. All despised him.

"Whittaker, take this pistol—which I will load for you." He took a bullet from his bag and powder from his horn and rammed the charge in. "And shoot him through the heart. . . . No, no, you fool! A decent man's heart is on the left—wherever yours may be." Totonic muttered, and playfully pushed the muzzle away. "Here, give it back to me."

Fenton knelt beside the prostrate man, so degraded by the white-man's drink, and without a word or a moment's hesitation shot him through the heart. Then he turned aside, cleaned his weapon, and slipped it back into his holster.

"Mount now."

"But, sir—we must take the head, if we are to get the reward from Boston." One of them produced an axe. Totonic's

head set upon a pole on Boston Common? Not as long as Fenton Parre lived.

"Any reward will go to me. I recognized him and I slew him. I take no money for the head of Totonic."

The men demurred slightly. If he did not wish the reward, why might they not have it? Because not one of them, nor himself either, was worthy to desecrate that dead body before their feet.

Now the Captain, holding his horse's head with his left hand, turned to the body. All his life he had had followers and boon companions and women when he wanted them; but only one Totonic. In the midst of many, he had remained at heart isolated and alone. Well, there lay his friend. He had done the decent thing for him—the same as he had done for Gertrude when she had become old, blind, and her hind legs had begun to drag.

Death had brought an amazing change. Here was no drunken sot. The lips were parted but in no way distorted. The expression was gentle, relaxed, almost childish.

So they left him for beasts to tear, and quickly overtook the women. Johnny's swollen eyes were fastened on Fenton's face. She had heard the shot. He nodded, and looked away.

21

BY midsummer, a few at a time the fugitives began to come back to Canaan. The Widow Orde came, and her son Jimmy, his wife and stepchildren. Out of charred planks they built a shelter. In a barrel under a sassafras tree Jimmy brewed the ale as nicely as his father ever had in his malt-house. Twice a week, as formerly, the goodwife baked bread in the oven at the base of the great, now naked chimney. It was com-

fortable, on crossing the Goose Common, to see this woman—attended by her daughter-in-law—standing on a plank laid over the cellar hole peering into their oven. Her skirts were pinned back, her head tied in a white cloth. She took out the crusty loaves on her long peel with as much professional nicety as though she were standing in her own kitchen—not thus balanced on a plank, with the blue sky overhead and a charred cellar hole below.

The Baileys returned, looking shabby and seedy. Landed proprietors they might be in Canaan, but at Ipswich where they had taken refuge they had not been too proud to hire themselves out as day-labourers. Deacon Noah (a man over eighty) never recovered from the hard work he had done on another man's estate.

"'Twath not my own lands that killed me," he would lisp. "I could have gone on carrying thtone from Baileyth' Acreth until I was a hundred. 'Twath the thand at Ipthwich."

One small barn had escaped the burning. In this they lived—the two old men. But not Judith. Grown independent in her five months of freedom, she said that her duty was to stay on at the mill to care for the men there.

But the Blues came back: the miller, with his noble Roman head and his vacuous eye; his long, lean wife; Paul's widow, Priscilla, and Dick's wife—once more a widow (Dick had been slain when Canonchet had been captured); Abraham and his wife, Hagar.

Now Gervase, who had been the constable and leading citizen in the five months the village had been all but deserted, said it was safe, doubtless, for folk to scatter a little, go to their own houses if still standing; if not, they might build themselves huts. So the days of his authority were over, for now deacons and tithingmen, selected men and gentlemen

were returning. But they had changed and he had changed. Never again would they throw up against him that he was a nameless man and a servant. The position of captain he had earned in war-time was to continue on in peace. He was given four hundred acres from Great Commons—which now it had been voted to cut up for private farms—and had been elected to be one of the five Selected Men for Canaan. So he had won his place at last. But Jazan (so young and impatient had she been) could not wait for “ten years or fifteen or an Indian uprising.”

Judith Bailey amazed everyone and pleased all but her father and her uncle by even now refusing to return to the parental barn. She had decided to marry Will Partridge, for years a servant at Baileys' Acres. This mature couple would set up for themselves at Groton.

Jazan was sad to see that her old friend Rue was for a few years, at least, to fill the position of daughter to that unlikely household. Seth, the Younger, had died at the futile defence of Sudbury, but Rue's son, the youngest Seth of all, was likely to be the heir of the Baileys' many acres. For his sake would she endure the domination of the old men. But very old they seemed since their return. They could not last for long.

About the “River Garrisons” (as Paradise and the mill were called) the palisades were still left standing, in case another attack should come. No one expected this. The Indians everywhere were surrendering by the hundreds. Captives were being returned—but no word had come of Forethought Fearing, nor of Jake and Varney. King Philip had not one supporter left, except a handful of his own Wampanoags. Everyone waited for word of his capture or death.

It came at last, at the end of a hot August day. Jazan had

been to Baileys' Acres to carry Rue some of Isobel's outgrown clothes for her son. She knew that the boy's grandfather would not be apt to spend money on clothing for a child, nor did she blame him much—there was so much that must be rebuilt. But she was shocked to find that a chimney was being added to the barn where they now lived. It had been decided that with a little plastering and a chimney the barn would do well enough for a house.

On crossing the Goose Common she saw a group gathered about a country cart—but could that be Phoebe, standing up and addressing them? And then she saw a little curly white head, two black eyes staring over the side of the cart—the anxious frown. . . . Phoebe had taken it upon herself to bring "Lambkin" back to Canaan. Jazan flew to her child, and this time the baby did not pull back from her kisses. She was sure that she remembered her. The servant's child, only two months younger than Isobel, slept in a basket.

"Oh, Phoebe—I didn't tell you to come. I'm afraid it is not safe yet, here."

"Safe enough, Mistress," the stout servant answered, beaming. "I was just announcing to the folk, King Philip is slain."

Preserved English and his third wife and all her family (who had always lived with him) came out of the house they had managed to put up. The smith never seemed the same man after Mercuricus's death.

"What's the news, Goodwife Truly?" he demanded of Phoebe. Phoebe's face was streaked with sweat, for the day was very hot.

"I tell you, word came this morning to Boston. They caught him—the men of Plymouth caught King Philip. When he knew he was beaten he went home to Mount Hope where he was born, like a wounded dog to his kennel; and one of his own

Indians who had come over to us shot him, and they cut off his head, and because he was a rebel to the King they quartered his body—just as nice as though it all had happened in the Tower of London. And so, I told Mrs. Fayrweather—I and my baby and Mrs. Fearing’s baby . . . we’d all go home this day. Now, ’twas safe enough. And she said no. So I went to the market and hired this fellow myself. . . . I’m sorry, Mistress, I hadn’t the money for him. I promised that *you’d* pay.”

“I will,” said Jazan. “Carter, follow me to my own house.”

“Will you not ride, ma’am?”

“No, I’d rather walk.”

Jazan wanted to walk—walk back to Paradise with Lambkin in her arms. Her heart was high within her.

Fields of barley and of rye, corn fields and wheat and oats. Cabbages in their rows, turnips, beans, squashes. Fenton might be the legal owner of this great farm; but by their labour, “by the sweat of their brow,” it belonged to Gervase and to herself.

“Oh, Lambkin—this is your home, and I’m your mother. Do you understand? Say Mam-ma . . . Mam-ma.”

“Mamma,” said Lambkin in a surprisingly loud, clear voice. And began to wriggle—she wanted to be put down. It was as if she was set upon showing her mother how much she had learned since she had been gone. She walked very well.

Behind them creaked the cart, with Phoebe and her son enthroned upon a box. The carter cracked his whip.

BY the end of August Captain Parre was ordered to disband his troop, for the war was over—although there still was fight-

ing in Maine and might be for many years. The soldiers were encamped upon Dedham Plains where, from round about, folk came to gaze at these gaunt warriors who had been in the saddle for over a year and had killed and captured more of the enemy than some of the regiments of militia. Two rows of miserable small tents; the flint-locks stacked and covered against the damp; the pots boiling on the fire. The long double line of tethered horses, munching their hay. The soldiers themselves were lounging about, gathered in little groups talking in low voices. If they felt any jubilation that this was their last night in camp, they did not show it. Instead, they seemed irritable and very tired. They were listless, even towards their liquor. The Captain saw that all was in the best of order.

Sixty men—but not the same sixty with which he had started out. Fenton's servant held his horse's bridle, and Fenton thrust the clerk's books into his saddle-bags. These books he would take that night to Boston. In them were listed the date of enrolment of each man, those who had been slain and wounded, and the back pay due to the survivors. He hoped to bring back the money with him next morning. In the militia regiments the men's pay went to the family of the soldier, not to the soldier himself. This had worked out well but had caused some bitterness. It was otherwise among Captain Parre's Privateers. Each man got his eight shillings a week—to squander if he liked.

By the time Fenton reached the Neck, it was blackest night. This isthmus between the Back Bay on the north and Boston Harbour on the south was but ten feet wide, for the tide was high. The watch guarding the city gates knew him and quickly let him pass, but still he rode through growing corn fields and darkened cabbage patches, with only a scattering of houses.

At last the cobbles began. Houses and shops stood shoulder to shoulder. He could smell the familiar smell of the capital: the sourishness of ale brewing; the sweetness of bread the bakers baked at night so it might be fresh in the morning; the acid from the tanneries; the nastiness of the slaughter-houses and open sewers; the cod split open and drying; and then, too, the smell of the littoral, the amphibian odour of land meeting sea.

He was stopped once again by the watch, but at last drew rein at his own house upon High Street. It was shuttered and barred for the night, seemingly locked fast—even against himself.

Fenton dismounted a little heavily and led his young mare to the stable at the back. Here were no dogs to bark either welcome or alarm. Star disliked dogs. By the kitchen door was a bench on which the servants sat to spin or pare vegetables or sew on sunny days. He sank down upon it, his chin in his hands, for at the moment he was loath to enter the house.

Tomorrow he would return to Dedham and pay off his men. Back to smithy and fields, rope-walks, fish nets, tanneries, and counting-houses, his hardy troop would go. And God go with you!

And himself . . . he might once more be a major in the Suffolk Regiment—very possibly, a colonel—and once more Commander of the Forts of Boston. But Captain Parre he would not be. . . . Yes, once more he would be a merchant and a good citizen of note.

It was not to his own house he returned, but to his wife's. Anselm and Jude never had seemed like his own children, but hers; and she herself . . . so tightly jealous she possessed her world she never seemed to belong to him. She held herself,

her children, and her house like a besieged fortress against him.

He took out a flint and tried to strike a spark to light his pipe. The tinder was damp. He sat with the cold pipe in his mouth. And above him the moon was full.

Was he glad the war was over and that once more he was back in security, peace, and domesticity? Yes . . . and no. Yes, he was glad. The bloody, dangerous years he had lived through already seemed the last fling of youth. He remembered with what selfish joy he had first heard that King Philip had risen up. But he was well content now that it was over. Now he could be at heart the good citizen, the respected merchant, which formerly he had but pretended to be. And Tonic's death. . . . Perhaps it was the shock of that which made him now content to live soberly and safely for all the rest of his years.

Quiet and still, breathing peace and security, the house sat beside him in the darkness like a friend. Well, he must go in now.

He knocked softly at the door.

"Dido," he called, for the old slave—whom Cousin Macey had thrown in with the house—slept in the kitchen.

There was no answer. He walked about the house. Beneath his wife's window he stopped. Even on this pleasant summer night the shutters were closed.

He picked up a handful of gravel and threw it against them. Almost immediately one opened.

"Who is there?"

"'Tis I, Star."

"Oh . . . one moment."

He knew what she would do. Wake one of the old serving-women and order her to go down and unbolt the door. It

would take some time. The old body would first light herself a candle, then find slippers and cloak to cover her aged charms. Star herself—it would not be likely that *she* would come running with bare feet to cast the bolt herself, unable to wait one moment before she greeted her home come man!

He sat again upon the bench, his arms folded. And when the servant had let him in and he went up to her chamber, she would reproach him slightly for the lateness of the hour . . . for that tear in his hat brim, his shabby boots, and broken nails. Never once had it got through her head that fighting savages in swamps and thickets was a different business from mounting guard before Whitehall. She had taken no pride in his troop because they never were well uniformed and the horses they rode were of different sizes.

He heard a patter of feet and impatient hands struggling with the bar. The bolts shrieked, the door opened, and Star flung herself upon him with her arms about his neck. Barefooted and in her night-rail, she had run to him—without even stopping to make a light or wake a servant.

“Fenton, Fenton—you are back for good?” Usually she preferred to call him Captain Parre.

“Ay, for good or ill.”

He swung her up in his arms. She seemed more like a little pet animal than a woman. Half crying and half laughing, she pressed her mouth to his. In the kitchen Fenton threw kindling on the embers as the quickest way to make a light and then flung himself on the bench beside his wife, and again they were in each other's arms.

“You are well? You are not hurt?”

“I never was better—nor felt safer.”

For he did feel safe with those childish arms about his heavy shoulders. It was as if for the first time in his life he

felt safe and secure. Now he knew he never wished to go forth again. He was ready, at last, for security.

"Dido always said you would be slain."

"No, I will know when my time comes. Where is Dido?"

"She died a month ago."

"But the boys are well?"

"Oh, yes—but they have grown so fast this summer!"

"Is little Isobel still here?"

"Nurse Truly has taken her back to Jazan. . . . And have you heard? Wanalancet has sent word to our Governor that the Indians who captured Mr. Fearing and Varney are ready to return them."

"But what of Jake?"

"Nothing is known of him."

The pause that followed filled each with knowledge of his possible fate.

"Next week men will be sent to Mount Wachusett. The Indians who captured them dare come no closer to civilization, even now that there is a truce."

"'Tis more than a truce, my little dear. 'Tis peace." And the word "peace" tasted sweet upon his lips.

"I hope so. I hope so with all my heart. Fenton, a letter came for you today. The Governor's servant said it was to be given to you as soon as you returned."

"Probably he is offering me a thousand acres of land instead of pay."

He took a spill and lighted a candle. The writing was big and bold. As he stood reading, his wife noticed how grey he was over the temples. His face was heavily lined. He folded the letter and thrust it inside his leather jerkin.

"What is it, Fenton?"

"Oh . . . nothing."

The Governor had written asking him within the week to start for the Province of Maine. He was to be in full charge of the military operations. The war was not over yet down east, even if it was in the Bay Colony. He did not want to go.

That time he had gone to treat with all the Nipmucs—he had known then he went into direst danger, and yet he had known he would come out alive. Once at Deerfield he had been cut off from his men. With his back against a barn he had fought six of the painted savages. There was not a chance in a hundred he would not die; but he had known that his time had not yet come. And when he had been the first white man to jump down into Canonchet's fort . . . No, not yet. But now, as he stood before his wife with the Governor's request in his pocket . . . Now . . . now the time had come! He foresaw it all. He seated himself and drew his wife into his lap.

"What more news since I was home last in May?"

"That last time you were here—when you left me, you left me with child."

He laid his hand upon her belly, felt the swelling of new life under his palm.

"Another son, I suppose. They say men under arms are like to beget men."

"Yes, and this one . . . will be like you."

"Why do you think so?"

She hesitated, turning her face against his breast.

"Anselm and Jude—when they were begotten . . . I thought only of myself. But this one . . . That one night you were here with me last May, I thought only of you. I think I have begun to feel, Fenton—not the way I used to feel, but the way you have always wanted me. . . ." He

kissed her hair. "Perhaps, if I always feel as I did last May . . . things may go differently between us."

"But they have never gone so ill. Nothing ever goes quite right," he said.

They sat for some time in silence, his hand still resting on her fruitful body. He believed that by the time the child was born he would be dead. But to excuse himself to the Governor did not enter his mind. He remembered a posthumous boy he had known at Canaan as a lad—Fathergone Linkhorn. His schoolfellows had laughed at his tragic name. He smiled to himself in the fire-light.

So close did Star seem to him at that moment, he told her of Priam, the Mendon lad he had been unable to rescue. If the boy was now found, Fenton wished him adopted into his own family. To this, Star agreed. Without his telling her she knew how the memory of the afflicted child had followed him.

But of Totonic he did not speak. In that matter she would have no understanding. Totonic's death . . . the moment he had stood looking down upon that face to which death had returned its old expression of nobility . . . the great affection that had existed between them—these things Star would not understand. It was enough for him, at the moment, that she understood as much as she did. He would ask no more of her than she had to give, and he was humbly grateful for the unexpected warmth of her greeting and her sympathy in the matter of Priam. That was enough, and he was well content. Only fools demand more of women than they have to give—or of men either. And anyway, in a week he must start for Saco.

The fire began to die down, and the tired man thought of the soft goose-feather-bed waiting for him above. And Star

did love him, in her own way—this he had always known. Let it be in her own way—for as short or long a time as God saw fit.

23

A FEW months only had it taken for Forethought Fearing to become a legend. The stories did not stop with the plain facts of his heroic conduct during the attack on Canaan. Now, unreasonable, God-sent thunder had been heard as he had bidden the people of Paradise to hold out yet longer, for help came. It was he who had led King Philip back to Mount Hope and certain death. It was Mr. Fearing who during the raid upon Bradford had suddenly appeared before a blazing farm-house and bidden the Indians be gone and the rains to quench the fire.

At Wrentham, a girl of seven or eight had been found wandering in a wood the morning after her father's house had been burned. She kept pressing her hands to her head and seemed in a daze, but when questioned she could answer. Yes, the night before, the Indians had captured her. They had taken her a little way and then knocked her on the head with a musket. Thinking her dead, they had torn off her scalp. It was about noon when she had awakened. An "angel" was bending over her, fitting back upon the bloody skull the purloined scalp.

"An angel? But how was he dressed?"

"In black silk and white bands."

"How knew you he was an angel?"

"By his shining face—a light like a sun. He had no wings."

He had fetched water for her and pointed the way she was to take back to Wrentham. When she started to thank him he had vanished—"like gunpowder."

"What colour was his hair?"

"Pale and curling, almost white."

"His voice?"

The most beautiful she had ever heard.

This was the lost clergyman of Canaan. Nor could it be himself in his own body. The marvel of the dead man's devotion grew.

Then in August, word came through Wanalancet that Mr. Fearing lived and an arrangement might be made for his return. Half the people were ready to believe it was a trick the Indians played upon them. Forethought Fearing had been dead for the last four months, for it was not until a month after his capture his apparition first appeared. He had become a wonder-working saint of the Puritans, as near and as remote as ever Saint Anthony or Saint Theresa were to those of the Roman faith. But Wanalancet had promised that if a small group be sent during the first full moon in September to Mount Wachusett, he would be returned—and Christopher Parre's son, Varney, as well.

When his wife in Canaan heard that he yet lived, she went immediately to Boston, hoping to have word with her brother Fenton. He had already taken boat for the Province of Maine. Jazan stopped with Star in the old Macey house. There was a newcomer here, most vexatious and troublesome to the orderly Star. It was Totonic's daughter, the six-year-old Mercy. She, alone, among the captured Swamp Town Indians, Fenton had been able to buy. The others, including old Clara-Wood-Tree, had been sold into slavery to Jamaica. But not Johnny; she had escaped the night after her husband's death, and some thought Captain Parre had winked at the matter.

Even Jazan was amazed that anything so young could be so savage as Mercy. She knew that the little girl recognized

her; in a way, trusted her. It was to be hoped that at Paradise she might be brought up a useful Christian woman, but as Jazan looked into those jet-black Indian eyes, touched the coarse black horsehair on her head, she wondered if she was not attempting more than she could do. She had wished it might have been little Fortunatus, Moon Goes' son, who was to become her ward. Mercy was more of an Indian than her own father. But time enough to think of such matters after Forethought should be saved.

Everywhere in Boston they were praising her devotion. For it was known that when the time came for the six men to ride out to Mount Wachusett to redeem the minister, his wife would ride with them. It was only after she had cast herself at Governor Leverett's knees and in tears begged this favour of him that he had consented.

"Madam," he said, courteously raising her, "a woman who has lived through the sacking of Canaan and has dared, for the last six months, to toil so heroically on the very edge of disaster, as you have, is beyond my command. It is not because I approve of a woman's presence on so dangerous an errand but because I feel I have not the right to command you that I say you may ride with the men sent to Mount Wachusett and be the first to welcome your husband from his living grave."

She could not speak for tears but kissed his hand.

On the following Sabbath Mr. Increase Mather had preached a sermon on wifely devotion, using her for his text, more than the verse he had chosen from Proverbs. The love of a good woman for her good husband was perhaps God's greatest gift to humanity. 'Twas indeed above the price of rubies. People spoke to her respectfully, as though they believed she lived beyond their meaner, safer ways. And the legend which

had already sprung up about Mr. Fearing was now shaped to accommodate the great love that had always existed between him and his wife. But Jazan could not endure the silent respect that she commanded. That sermon of Mr. Mather smote her conscience. Gladly would she have cried out: "It is not because I love him that I do this. . . . It is because I have wished that he might never come back. And yet I have loved him."

On the first day of September, once more a merchant and soon to be plump again, Jonathan Fayrweather drove her in his chaise as far as Watertown, and there she found the six soldiers waiting for her in the inn yard. For a moment she could not get out of the chaise, could not say good-bye to Jonathan.

"Why do you weep, Jazan?" he asked. "You seemed strong and happy all this spring and summer when everything was so black, and now . . . since that day the Governor granted you your request—you have been in such a heavy mood."

"Fears are worse sometimes when they are over."

"Yes. Then one has time to think on them. I, myself . . . now, I wake up in the nights remembering the danger I was under in your brother's troop. At the time, I had no time for it. I only could wonder if the pots would boil."

He made no pretence that he was anything more than cook to Captain Parre.

They went into the tap-room, and she felt the slight hostility of her escort. They did not like a woman to ride with them. Three of them had already served under Fenton. These, Jonathan introduced to her. In command was Hardship Whitaker. He had a bony form, long arms, large hands, and an evil eye. Jazan, looking upon him, could believe the stories she had heard of him: how he had tortured Indians, even Indian

women. There was an evil look of lust about his lips. was not the lust of a man for women—but for blood.

But when the escort saw that she wore heavy muskrat boots and would ride astride the horse they had procured for her, the worst of their fears were allayed. And she was Fenton Parre's sister. . . . But any woman was bad enough.

At Sudbury, where they stopped for dinner, a group gathered about to stare at her reverently. She heard the murmur: "She went to the Governor. She begged on her knees . . . he said it was holy love. He said . . ."

A poor woman had two little girls with her. She went to Jazan and begged her to pray that with God's help they would grow up to be dutiful and loving wives. She asked her to kiss them. When they were older they might remember. She bent down from the saddle and kissed the smooched little faces. Her heart felt black with hypocrisy. And yet, it was not hypocrisy. She had been so miserable with Forethought she could hardly wish him back again, and yet she had loved him—and her soul was torn.

The second night they camped by Lake Quinsigamond and the third beyond Lancaster, which now was being built up once more. Those rich, wonderful meadows—there was nothing to harvest there but weeds.

Early the next day, from a hill-top, she could see the majestic sweep of Mount Wachusett, a far blue hill with a lesser hill to its left and another to its right. Clouds rolled over its forehead and mist clung to its knees, for the day was lowering. And the trail turned upward. Never before had she breathed air at this altitude, and she filled her lungs with its winy strength. But suddenly she wanted to cry again—she thought of Forethought's little muff. And she began to laugh.

24

NOW she had found her place with the men. Seeing how well she sat her horse, how cheerfully she slept upon the ground, they were able to appreciate the romance her presence cast over their journey. She was lovely to see with that lifted head uncovered to the sun, and her wide dark eyes had a hint of sorrow in them—which is appealing in a young woman's eyes.

Hardship Whittaker disliked women only next to Indians. When the two evils were combined in the shape of a squaw his hatred knew no bounds. As far as he was able he ignored the fair stranger fate had cast into his keeping, but it was from him she learned for the first time the details of Totonic's death. She had not questioned Fenton. The things that moved Fenton most he always spoke of in a callous way or not at all. The other young men of the troop proved more companionable than their lieutenant.

Deeper and deeper into the heart of the virgin forest they penetrated. Never had she dreamed of such great spruces, such cliffs and ledges, such damp forest fragrance. The horses picked their way over fallen trees and racing torrents. Not since morning had she had sight of the mountain, but now the men told her they were close to it. Confidently, they said by now the Indians knew of their approach; soon they would send a guide to meet them. Early in the afternoon they made their camp. As soon as the fire was burning well they threw on wet leaves, damp blueberry bushes—anything to make a smudge so that the Indians upon the mountain might look down and note their position. They moved about with greater seeming assurance, their flint-locks in their hands, their bullet sacks about their necks. At once they all seemed happier and

more wide awake. So she guessed that they felt that here they were in danger.

In her saddle-bag Jazan had some twenty pounds of English gold. This was the sum stipulated by Wanalancet, who had carried on the negotiations with Boston. The "friendly" Indians who had taken Mr. Fearing and Varney away from the hostile Narragansetts had earned this "small sum" for "boarding" the white men these last months. He would not call the money "ransom." If their present keepers were indeed friendly, would they have feared to come closer than this wild spot? The soldiers kept close guard. The war might be over in the Bay Colony and truce declared, but they took no chances with whoever it might be held Varney Parre and Forethought Fearing.

No sooner was the supper pot on the fire than they heard a guttural shouting. The guides were approaching and wished to show their friendliness. Three of the thinnest savages ever seen came unarmed to them, their hands spread out empty before them. Whittaker addressed them rudely in their own tongue. They shrugged, sat down, and indicated that first they would eat; and so they ate—not only most of the supper prepared for the seven white people but much of the next day's breakfast. Actually these men had been starving. Jazan dreaded to think what fare might be given a captive when the warriors themselves were hungry. After their food, they said they would sleep the night with "their friends." In the morning they would lead the way to Thunder Bird, with whom the business was to be transacted.

Nobody wished these dangerous folk in camp for the night. The soldiers abandoned all thought of sleep but, in brightest, white moonlight, stood guard all night. They feared a trap. Yet the gorged warriors of Thunder Bird (an Indian none of

them had ever heard of before) slept unarmed and trustfully before the fire.

Jazan was cold with a mixture of emotions, but fear was the uppermost. She tried to tell herself it was fear of the wild brilliant night passed in the midst of the Indian land. And these three great scrawny, tawny beasts—they might any moment jump up with knives in their hands. Thunder Bird might decide to wipe them all out. Whittaker said that he was sure these savages were a last small rear-guard of hostile Nipmucs and Wampanoags and Narragansetts, who were now on their way to join the Tarratines to the north and east. It was thought, at Boston, that along the coast of Maine the war had not been finished, but started only.

But it was no physical danger that Jazan feared. She could not deny it herself. . . . She was afraid to see her husband—afraid of his return to Paradise, where for the last spring and summer she had worked hard and been at peace.

After breakfast the savages were ready to start forth. They said only the woman and one man were to go with them, and the man should not be the Lieutenant. The Indians all hated Whittaker. Thunder Bird was unwilling to treat with him. In vain Whittaker explained that he alone could speak Algonquin and there was no need for the woman to go at all. But no. Thunder Bird had commanded. It did not surprise Whittaker that word had already got to the chieftain on the mountain who were in the party, but he was nonplussed as to who this Thunder Bird might be. He demanded to know the man's previous name. The Indians refused to tell him. Whittaker refused to stay behind, refused to permit the woman to go. The argument went on until nearly noon and at last it was Jazan who insisted there had been talk enough. Go she would, and with the Lieutenant's permission, Peter Fairchild, the en-

sign, would go with her. This Fairchild was the best born and youngest of the six and had appealed to her the most. He had reminded her of that Jan Royale Fenton had brought once with him to Paradise, for he was very fair and of a deceptively innocent expression.

With one Indian before and two walking after, they started out on foot. Fairchild carried the gold. Now the path was difficult and always leading up. They came to a short terraced cliff she could not have managed without Fairchild's help. Up and up they went, and the dark forest grew thinner and the rocks bolder and barer. Not once had she had sight of this mountain since a few miles west of Lancaster, so shut in had she been by forest, and now she was fighting for her footing upon its craggy sides. Fairchild was most assiduous in caring for her, but even in this moment of stress and strain she noticed how his hand lingered on hers as he helped her and his arm lingered about her waist. Yes, it was thus always (she thought) with these innocent-looking blond young men.

At last they stood upon the bald and naked summit, and the sun poured down upon them and the wind whipped their faces. For the moment, her pounding heart and torn nails, even her mission, were forgotten. Such a sight she had never seen: great valleys and lakes, forests thick and unbroken, rolling hills, and to the north—another mountain.

"Monadnock," said Fairchild. "And see, yonder and far away—those must be the 'White Hills.'" Far, far to the north—a jagged line of mountain tops.

And she saw the purple shadows of the clouds rolling over the gigantic green valleys, the unending wilderness. Close to the sun himself they were, and the wind never abated.

They were led to a rocky, sheltered nest a little way from the summit, and there were thirty Indians sitting close to a

pool of water fed by a spring. Neither Forethought nor Varney were with them.

"How do? How do?" they cried politely.

She tried to remember the Algonquin words of greeting, but she could not. What little of their tongue she once had known was now mostly forgotten. But "Ho'wah?" she asked. The Indians and the white man and woman faced each other, and there was no interpreter. She knew that for a little while they must sit quietly and smoke together. This they did, and then, when she felt she had kept the pipe in her mouth long enough for courtesy (surely this was not tobacco they smoked), she said, "Thunder Bird?" and pointed to the incredibly ugly monster who seemed to be their chief man.

"Me, Thunder Bird—me."

Looking at him, she thought he was the finest example of all the white men hated and feared in the Indians. Never before the war had she seen such a one. He was of gigantic stature, although gaunt and hungry like his warriors. She knew why Whittaker had not been allowed to see him. He had another name and did not wish to be recognized. His face, terribly mutilated by burns and half-healed knife wounds, expressed the most malignant cunning and cruelty she had ever seen. No war-paint could have made him look more ferocious or bestial. How was it, then? Were all the gallant Indians like Totonic and Canonchet killed off, and only the beasts remaining?

"Forethought Fearing," she said slowly, "Varney Parre."

"Hump wampun."

"Gold?" she suggested.

"Gold," he agreed with alacrity. He was not a stupid man.

Fairchild said, "Forethought Fearing, Varney Parre—then gold."

It was a nice but futile point. The Indians might have taken the gold if it pleased them. They understood but smoked on in a silence which, to Jazan, was unbearable. In despair she caught the young ensign's bright blue eye. He winked at her. It was a curiously urbane wink for the top of Mount Wachusett. At least the Indians must see the gold before they showed their captives. Fairchild spread it out in the sun before them, dividing it in two heaps.

"Varney Parre," and he pointed to the little heap. "Forethought Fearing," and he pointed to the larger.

"Varney Parre," Thunder Bird at last agreed, and called shrilly.

There was a movement in the pine scrub behind a boulder. Jazan saw a tall, thin, stark-naked child, with a tangle of yellow curls growing half-way to his waist, led towards her by three Indians. But it was not Varney—it could not be Varney. He had seen her, and with a cry of incredible relief she could never forget, he flung himself towards her. He was thin as a spider and covered with sores; but it was his expression that was so appalling. She knew as she took him in her arms and kissed his filthy little face that he was as much a changeling as any child stolen by mountain elves. The tough and rosy Varney, who had so often irritated her with his lack of any sensitiveness or normal fear, was gone—but this changeling at least was called Varney Parre, and he was her brother Christopher's son. Lines in his cheeks which at his age should have been still dimples. A look of blind defeat in his eyes. She had seen the same look in her brother's eyes for a few months after the branding.

"I didn't think anyone would ever come—oh, Aunt Fearing, you did come! Johnny said you would, but Uncle Fearing

always said you wouldn't. He said God would come—I didn't want God to come, I wanted . . .”

Thank God, Forethought was still alive. Half had she been unable to believe it. And what did he mean by “Johnny”? She glanced now at the Indians who had led forth the child. One of them was indeed Johnny Pigge, but she gave no sign of recognition. She was dressed in an Englishman's fustian breeches, torn to shreds. Her buff coat, such as Fenton's troopers wore under their armour, was too narrow to button in front, so that her breasts hung, naked and shameless, a parody on the maleness of her attire. About her broad waist was buckled a sword-belt and a sword. She carried a fine flint-lock in her dirty hands. No sign of recognition from her. Jazan respected her desire to repudiate an old friendship. And, after all, it had been Fenton who with his own hand had shot Totonic.

Peter Fairchild had again turned to the chief, pointing to the gold. “Forethought Fearing,” he demanded. There followed unintelligible clucks in Algonquin. Jazan's eyes sought Johnny's, begging her to interpret what might be amiss. At last Johnny spoke, but with a strong Indian accent.

“My husband say money not enough.” (Her husband! As God lived! Could any woman who once had had Totonic submit herself to this revolting monster?) “The twenty pounds, Jazan, were for Fearing only.”

So she deigned to call her by name!

“It was not thus we heard from Wanalancet. The twenty pounds of English gold were for them both.” Johnny translated.

Thunder Bird's mutilated face became convulsed with anger.

“My husband say, ‘What gifts?’”

“Gifts? We brought nothing but the gold.”

Now all the warriors were jabbering together. Jazan glanced at Fairchild. His head was lifted, his lips smiling slightly, his nostrils seemed to taste the air. He was like the war-horse in Job, smelling the battle from afar; and she felt an overwhelming pride—not in him as a person, for he was only a fair-haired little fellow with a girlish face—but in all Englishmen, who at the scent of danger lift their heads to meet it.

"Johnny," Jazan burst out, "I am in your hands, and Forethought too, and this young man. In the name of my father, whom you always loved, I beg your help now."

Across Johnny's ugly mug came an expression well copied from her now seething lord.

"Well, if you will give us gifts . . ." she said at last.

"I tell you, we have nothing."

"I need new breeches—that young man . . . I like them." And she spoke with authority to her husband.

Slowly Fairchild, foreseeing his own predicament, began to blush. Johnny beckoned Jazan apart.

"Have 'ee no tobacco?" said Johnny, lapsing from her Indian accent into Cornish, when they had walked a short way. "We will sit and smoke." And she indicated a lichened ledge. And that view before them and below them: green, purple, and blue, stretching on forever and aye; and beyond even that, against the horizon, floated the White Hills.

Jazan took a pouch and pipe from her belt. During the months she had worked so hard at Paradise she had come to find much solace in her pipe. She filled it and offered it to Johnny.

"Now I will talk to 'ee honest," said the squaw, with a sigh of satisfaction. But then they found they could not start a light from Johnny's tinder-box. The woman fell into a meaningless fury and stalked off back to the men. Jazan half believed she

would not return again to her, such a rage she had been in over the paltry lighting of a pipe. After a long time she reappeared, her sword clanking over the rocks behind her, her naked breasts swinging before her—but the pipe lit and smoking between her teeth. So she sat again and was at peace.

“’Ee have taken my Marcy to Paradise?”

“I have done so, even as I promised you.” She was glad Johnny did not question her about the other women and children, all of whom had been so cruelly sold to tropic slavery, far indeed from the green rolling hills and winy valleys of New England.

“Ay,” said Johnny slowly, “that’s well done.” She puffed the smoke contentedly through her broad nostrils. “Now, as to Mr. Fearing . . . I will tell the truth. In no way is Wana-lancet to be blamed in this matter. We tricked him to believe Mr. Fearing yet lives, so he might the better trick ’ee. We must have money to buy muskets and powder from the Vrench. It seemed the only way to git it.”

Jazan bowed her head. She was not surprised.

“Did he die—soon, after they took him? And, Johnny, how did he die?”

“There were no cruelties—’cept cruelties of March snaw an’ hunger. The Indians thought him daft, a little. You know what honour they have for daffies? And they wanted to git moneys for him too. So he traped for weeks through woods and rarely spoke and niver complained. He smiled oft.” (That sweet but crooked smile—never would Jazan forget it!) “And he carried Jake and Varney, turn-an’-turn-about. He went hungry that they might eat and lay cold by night so they could have his kivers. But he was wisht and weary, and a-lookin’ for to die.”

“You saw this, Johnny?”

"Naw, not I. I heard Totonic tell. Totonic, *he* saw 'im. They talked much together. You mind you how in olden days Mr. Fearing was set upon Totonic's coming to Christianity? Almost he did, last March—so sweetly your man bespoke 'im."

Johnny passed the pipe at last to Jazan, who took it with trembling fingers. She felt cold and calm inside. Strange to see her fingers tremble.

"An' at the end, Jazan, it war not so bad. One mornin' he couldn' git up. You know we Indians club to death any captive that can't walk with us? But they waited and let he sleep more. At noon time they looked agin. He was dead."

"And where was the place that he . . . died?"

Johnny pointed north across the great valley. "Younder. From where I sit I do see the fir tree. . . . Naw, naw! Ye do not look where I do point! To your right. . . . Naw, naw—God save us! To your left, you buffle-head! 'Tis that fir tree standing on the knap o' the hill, amongst oaks and chestnuts. The only fir amongst them. 'Twas at the foot o' that very tree, they tell me, he laid down to die." But still Jazan could not make out the tree-top. Johnny's temper, which seemed to have grown very evil, flared up. She refused to point further. "Oh, you zachy!" she said, and started to walk off; thought more kindly, turned back, and took her companion's hand. "Co," she said softly, "does it matter then so much? Is it not enough for you that yon g'eat valley is his burial-place, and gravin' clouds for winding-sheet and wind to mourn? And see!—an eagle, flying! Oh, let Wachusett and Monadnock stand headstone and footstone to un! 'Tis a-twixt and a-tween 'em that he lies."

And Jazan saw that this was indeed enough and turned away her straining eyes.

Never was he to lie in that gaunt tomb upon Copps Hill be-

side his father's bones; but Monadnock and Wachusett would stand guard to him forever.

"It was cruel trickery," she said at last, "to give out that yet he lived, promise to return him yet once more. . . ."

"Ess fay! 'Twas cruel. Some women, put upon by me as 'ee are, would take revenge upon my darter. Ye will not?"

"No—I could not." She thought of little Mercy. Once long ago she had seen Totonic's face convulsed with anger. That was because Clara-Wood-Tree had permitted Jazan to peer within her hut and see Johnny Pigge, sick, weak, and bald, lying there. And she had thought of Seseke, the rattlesnake. If she had not once seen that look on Totonic's face never could she believe he had begotten Mercy.

She inquired after Jake. Johnny would say little. She did not know what Indians might be holding him or whether he lived or died.

Johnny knocked out the pipe and returned it to Jazan and got to her feet.

"We can't griddle here on the groun' all day, gozziping," she said cheerfully. "An' one more thing, I must have that young man's breeches." Jazan walked behind her. What hips the Cornish woman had!

"You could never get into them. Fairchild is slender as a wand."

"I'll manage proper enough. True, I pop out 'ere and pop out there in man's tire, but 'tis better fit for me than women's floppers. There's a man's work to be done, and I'm the man to do it. For we go now, all of us, to join the fighting 'long the coasts of Maine." She stopped abruptly, facing Jazan behind her. She looked down, and her fingers (woman's fingers after all) toyed in confusion at a buckle. "Fenton," she said with difficulty, "Fenton Parre. They think so highly of 'im in Bos-

ton, doubtless he will be sent to Maine?" Jazan could not tell her that already he had gone. Doubtless at this very moment he was at Saco.

"Thunder Bird—he and I 'ave zwoon to kill that hurrisome Fenton Parre. Ye may tell 'em so from me."

"Johnny, he did for Totonic the only thing he might. . . ."

"Do ye not know, ye chuckleheaded fool—ye utter zachy . . . if it had not been for Fenton, Totonic would of gone north, just as Wanalancet did? And we would all be alive and happy. . . . Fenton—he destroyed everything. An' he did kill Totonic. An' so shamefully. . . . He got 'im drunk, and he shot 'im as he lay on the groun'. And me . . . think of how he shigged me—! I was fourteen only . . . I was such a cheeld I did not know. . . ."

"But Fenton was not the first."

"No, no. Piers Gurdson—he was the first, the stinkard swine! He said he'd tell your pa about the ducks my ma had stolt—if I wouldn't go out to the barn with 'im. They all did that . . . they knew things against my volks—all except Fenton. He gave me money for he knew I hadn't naught, an' he was lovin' an' gentle always—an' he said it was good fun an' did no 'arm. . . ."

"Then he was not so bad as others, Johnny," said Jazan, but her gorge rose against her brother. "You must not hate him so."

"The others, they were not worth the hatin'. An' my great Thunder Bird . . . you wait. He will kill Fenton."

"Has he personal grudge against him? Who is he, Johnny?"

"Well, now that we are leavin' today for the North, I see no grief in your knowing. His name is Canonchet, Zagamore of the Narragansetts."

"Oh, Johnny, he has lied to you if he claims so much.

Canonchet was taken at Seekonk, and he was executed for rebellion. And then, Canonchet . . . I never saw him, but all have said how beautiful he was."

"My Thunder Bird is no beauty—not now with them knife cuts upon his face—but once he was, Jazan, and once he was Canonchet. And he has sworn to tear that black scalp from Fenton's head and that black heart from his body."

Jazan herself led the way back to the waiting men beside the pool: Fairchild had been persuaded into one of the Indians' childish gambling games. She heard the excited cries of "Hub! Hub! Hubub!" as the players tossed their counters. Already Fairchild had lost four pewter buttons from his coat, but he had put the irascible Thunder Bird in good humour.

He saw Jazan's white face, jumped to his feet, his hat in his hand.

"They tricked us," she said wearily. "He has been dead for five months."

Now Thunder Bird, knowing his knavery discovered, snatched the gold coins which Fairchild had earlier spread out to tempt him. The Englishman snatched at the same moment. Instantly knives and tomahawks were out. These desperate men would have gladly taken a hundred lives to possess so much gold. Jazan begged Fairchild to give the money up without protest and begged Johnny to control the warriors. She was beside herself with fear. But when the matter had been settled (the Indians keeping the ransom), she found that Varney had been more frightened than herself even. He clung close to her, his terrible stricken eyes looking up at her from among the sores upon his face. Suddenly his nose began to bleed.

25

THE day was so close to ending there was no choice but they must sleep with the savages that night amidst the rocky ledges. At daybreak Fairchild, Varney, and Jazan were up early ready to start, the sooner the better. Their guides would not leave until they had boiled up a little samp in a pot. They did not offer to feed their guests. They had but very little.

Jazan walked away from them and looked once more across the valley to the north. Level and low stretched the light and shadows of the new day. Serene and beautiful it lay before her. So she stood upon Wachusett (which was his footstone) and looked across the tumbling green and saw lakes steaming with fog—and far away, still cloud-wrapped, was Monadnock. (There was his headstone.) She wished to learn this scene so well she never, not even as an old woman, could forget.

It was true they never had been happy together, yet that seemed not to mitigate her sorrow but to increase it. For not only had she his death to brood upon but the years that in some way they had managed to waste together. And why that was she would never know.

Just as they were starting to leave the summit and the three Indians who would guide them off the mountain (although not all the way to their camp) were ready, Thunder Bird demanded: "Gift, gift!" He seemed quick to learn the white man's words, and pointed to Fairchild's breeches. Having already robbed them of fifteen pounds this seemed too much. The Ensign turned scarlet. He begged Johnny to desist. But for a moment it seemed a choice between losing his breeches or their lives. For they all, even Johnny, had the temper of hornets. To the Indians there was nothing ludicrous

in the sight of their white man "guest" leaving in coat with shirt tails hanging below, almost naked from the waist down. Now that he was so shamelessly exposed he did not once come close enough to Jazan to give her and Varney the help they really needed over the cliffs. He was too busy trying to pin his shirt tail about him with thorns, which either pricked him or broke. He could not look at the lady without blushing. It was well, she thought, that this comical thing had happened to take her mind even for a little off Forethought. And Varney clung to her and needed her at every step.

After the Indians left them they had difficulty finding the hill-top where Lieutenant Whittaker awaited them. It was well on into the morning before they got to camp. While one man with a musket kept guard the others lay about asleep, for the last night (like the one before) they had feared attack. They lay like sacks, with coats or saddle blankets over their faces to shut out the sunshine.

Jazan felt sure that Varney would cease his frightened tremblings now that he saw so many white men, but at the sight of the camp he began to gasp.

"I smell the Indians, Aunt Fearing, I smell blood. The Indians . . ."

The sleepers jumped to their feet—all but one. Hardship Whittaker slept on, his head covered with a saddle blanket. There seemed no need to wake him until the horses were saddled and camp was broken. The men respected his sleep. Varney had again begun to bleed at the nose. He sat upon a rock, wiping the blood away with a cloth his aunt had given him. His eyes were fastened upon the sleeping Lieutenant. It was only Varney who showed no surprise when Peter Fairchild went to his superior and told him that all were ready to ride, and the sleeper did not move.

"Lieutenant"—Fairchild leaned over and shook his shoulders—"we are ready, sir. . . ." The saddle blanket fell away. From ear to ear his throat was cut. And they knew the Indians had in some way done it.

26

THERE were now two spare horses in the little cavalcade: Hardship Whittaker's buckskin and the horse provided for Forethought Fearing. This, too, was a buckskin. Saddled but riderless, these horses kept with their fellows. Up and down over heavy trails they went, through bracken and swamp, over brooks, streams, and fallen trees, but always through forest and always more down than up. From every hill-top Jazan glanced back to see the mountain, but it was not until they came to the open meadows of Lancaster that she saw it already far behind her.

Now the men relaxed a little. Until they reached Lancaster they feared the scrawny warriors of Wachusett might ambush them. At Lancaster, people stood about questioning in low voices. They knew the meaning of the empty saddles, glowing in the sun.

Jazan again tried to persuade Varney to mount one of the riderless horses. The boys had, in the old days, always been begging rides. She thought a horse to guide might take his mind away from its memories and cure his tremblings. He would not. He sat on a blanket behind his aunt with his hungry little arms about her and his voice, tired and chirpy, going on and on in the small of her back. So she learned what had happened to Jake.

Jake had quickly taken to the Indian way of life. He had (his aunt guessed) always been an insensitive and bold child,

and Varney had only copied, but copied well, his manner. He had not much minded the cruelties he had seen nor been revolted at the maggots, cooked out of a dead horse's hoof, that had been the first meal of their captivity. So he had become a favourite with the squaws who were their guards, and they were kind to him. At first they had taken from him the tiny pewter porringer that had been in his hand when he had been seized, only six feet from the mill palisade. But Jake had claimed that it was his "magic" and that he must have it. So his mistress had given it back to him. This porringer he wore suspended by a deer sinew about his neck, the way Indians wear their magic. The women had disliked Varney's trembling, sores, nightmares, and nose-bleeds, but had loved Jake.

At last they had met a group of Tarratine women. One of these was childless and set her heart upon Jake. So his mistress had sold him to the other woman. For a pair of English shoes had she sold him.

"Mind you, Aunt Fearing," the little voice piped into her back, "that smallest porringer we came to Paradise for to get? Jake still had it on when he went away—on a sinew about his neck. . . ."

Jazan had heard the story of the porringer the first time Varney had told it. She saw how he repeated and repeated himself and yet sometimes seemed to get no further along in his story.

Many times since that icy February night she had looked at the seven nails in the oak beam above the kitchen hearth. She could remember how, as a child, she had looked upon these porringers not as measures for grown women but toys for herself. Every child who came to Paradise always wanted these little things. Even Lambkin, if you carried her near them, would put out her hands and say, "Give, give. . . ." Now

Jazan swore that as long as she lived, the seventh nail in the row was to be empty—except only Jake himself came back to hang his “magic” with its fellows. Only a bit of pewter, no larger than a walnut shell, had Jake now to hold him to his own people. She hoped its “magic” would be strong. Perhaps twenty years from now Jake, a fierce Tarratine warrior (but blue-eyed and yellow-haired), would return. Perhaps it would take thirty or forty years for the magic to work in him, but he would find his aunt (an ageing woman, huddled close to the kitchen fire as ageing women huddle) waiting for him. And six little porringers upon the oak beam—and the one empty nail.

Varney’s voice brought her back from her reverie.

“Johnny told me that not an Indian is left in Swamp Town?”

“Not ever the one. And their lands . . . we’ve taken them, Varney. They are to be our new commons. Much of the old Great Commons are voted to Gervase Blue.”

“Not any Indians left, anywhere about Canaan?”

“Never one—except . . .” and she thought of Mercy, “I have taken Johnny’s own daughter. This is the only child left of Totonic’s breeding. Her, I have in my own house. But she’s only half Indian, Varney.”

“But half Indian is worst of all. The cruellest one I ever saw, *he* was half white.” They rode a mile in silence.

“Aunt Fearing, will you send her away?”

“Who, dear?”

“The little savage maid. You see, I never could come to play at Paradise no more if a little savage maid . . .”

“Hush, Varney, hush your fears. I’ll promise to rear her so you’ll never know she has one drop of Tawny blood. And you must help me, Varney.”

One little thin arm (his arms had been tighter about her

waist than any stays she had ever had on) was withdrawn. He was very still for a moment. She knew his bleeding had begun again. After a little he said woefully, "I will try to be a good boy and not be so much a-feared."

"You must do so, Varney." And she touched the hand still about her. "We must all try to love this little . . ." she stumbled over the name. For the moment she had forgotten the gentle name of Mercy. "Sesek," was what she had started to say.

Before they rode down into Sudbury Peter Fairchild, who had taken from the dead Whittaker not only the command of the troop but his breeches as well, went on ahead. He wished the news of Fearing's death to get to the waiting people before the widow herself arrived. Here at Sudbury the five soldiers would travel on to Boston and an escort from Canaan would wait to take the redeemed captives and Mrs. Fearing back to their own village, eight miles to the north.

Jazan found three of the deacons of her church had come (and toothless old Noah Bailey lisping out words of sympathy to her) and four of the Selected Men. The fifth and absent Selected Man was Gervase Blue. Salome had stayed for three days in Sudbury waiting to welcome her lost son, but now the great moment had come she was late. It was in silence and with doffed hats the men stood about the "Widow Fearing." Her tired horse drank and drank from the horse-trough before the inn; she watched the foam floating from its bit but could not face the respectful stares of those gathered about her.

Into this heavy silence Salome at last threw herself. "Varney, Varney. Oh, my little son. . . . Varney, where is Jake? Dear, don't be a-feared of me! See, Jazan—how thin he is and trembly!"

She had the child off the horse, and the two sobbed and trembled together. Now Jazan's horse had finished drinking, but he played with the water in the trough and bit at one of the riderless buckskins who drank beside him. She heard the voice of the minister of Sudbury. Hatless he stood at her stirrup.

"From God alone," said he, "comes the strength to bear our sorrows. Be thankful that for a few years he was granted you. Do not repine, Mistress. God's will be done."

She looked down upon his red and wintry face, saw the compassionate tears in his old eyes. "God's will be done," she said.

So Forethought Fearing was no more. That close-cropped head, delicate and turned away, cut most fastidiously, as though on a heathen coin. That restless soul . . . never had it found peace in this world. And the way his low and troubled voice could say her name . . . "Jazan." That overly sensitive body. . . . Still could she hear Johnny say, "Does it matter then so much? Is it not enough for you that yon g'eat valley is his burial-place?"

27

SOON the five soldiers had started on down the Boston road. Salome with Varney behind her and Jazan astride the strong black mare sent over for her from Paradise were ready to ride on with the delegation.

Salome's constant, cheerful chattering grated upon her. "My! how *tall* Varney has grown in eight months only!" She pretended not to see his woeful thinness, his sores, his stricken eyes. "Now we'll go along at a nice fast trot, dear, and soon you'll see Grandpa and Grandma. And Daddy will be coming

home to see you. Only guess—Tabby has six new kittens! I thought we'd name them for all the *good* Indians, who didn't join with wicked King Philip. For there were lots of them—good pious Christian Indians, who sided with the white men. I don't want you to think all Indians are bad."

Varney quietly withdrew one arm from about his mother's waist and began to wipe his nose upon his sleeve. Once again that mysterious bleeding. His aunt noticed, but his mother did not.

Jazan held back her horse. She felt she could not endure more of her sister-in-law's brave and silly chatter. Soon she was the last of the riders.

So she rode alone for two miles. Then the mare stopped in her tracks, turned her head, and began to whinny. A rider was coming up behind them at a canter . . . Tobey, now in fair condition, and on him the one Selected Man missing from the delegation. Gervase put out his hand to her, but he had little to say. Side by side they rode together.

"I saw you," he began at last, "coming back alone. I thought there were already too many at Sudbury to stare at you. I went over to the mill to see the miller upon a business."

She nodded. Another man might have preferred to spend the time alone and with his own thoughts. Gervase had done as he said—seen the miller "upon a business."

They came to a bright glade in the woods and through it ran a brown brook.

"'Tis here," said Gervase, pointing to a cairn, "Totonic lies. Every Indian that passes by puts one more stone upon the cairn."

"Wait . . . I will do the same." They got from their horses and took cold wet stones from the brook bed. "There is much to tell you, Gervase—things I can hardly tell another." But

she knew the time had not come to speak to him of Forethought, whom he had always hated.

"Tell me now."

"Gervase, I saw Johnny Pigge. She was with those Indians on Wachusett." She went on rapidly, describing Johnny and her breeches and that Thunder Bird who claimed to be Canonchet. Yet Fairchild had seen the sachem of the Narragansetts once at Seekonk and said it was not he. The man was a monster but, whoever he was, he had sworn to kill Fenton.

They sat upon the moss beside the cairn.

"I will tell Fenton," said Gervase, "when I go to him."

"You go?"

"Ay, Jazan."

"For how long?" He would not look at her.

"Before Fenton left for Saco I asked him if I might enlist with him—as soon as harvest was done at Paradise. When the Indian war in Maine is over I had thought to settle there."

"So far from Paradise?"

"It has not always been Paradise for me—but Hell rather. When word came from Wanalancet that *he* lived—I saw I could not, no *could* not go on at Paradise as in the past. Fenton . . . he saw, too."

"You have promised Fenton to go to him?"

"No, only asked his permission."

"So you could change—if you wished?"

"I could change. I will not go unless you are willing."

"Oh, you must go your way—and I, mine."

"For a little, yes." But he took the hand that lay close beside him on the moss. "Jack Truly . . . he can manage in my absence. Jazan, I will stay in Maine as long as the fighting lasts. When it is over—a year from now, two years from now . . . I will come back to you."

She remembered her earlier resentment (and that talk, too, was full of the scent of leaf-mould and ferns and shadowed by forest trees). Then it had been the lisp of lake water that had filled their silences; now it was the tinkling of a brook. Now she was glad he had no more to say. "I will come back to you," was all she could have endured to hear.

Ten years, fifteen years, or an Indian uprising? And the Indian uprising had come and, even as he had promised, good men had risen fast to the top. Surely now his pride was satisfied. Pride to him would always come before love (so low born was he). With this, too, she was satisfied.

They rode at last out of the gloomy forest into the open Sheep Walks of Canaan. Only great trees and the turf itself had been able to withstand the gnawings of generations of sheep. The road they followed led them up to the top of a windy hill, beautiful Parre Hill, and before them in richness stretched the valley of the Catacoonamaug and the town of Canaan. They drew rein, and the horses fell to plucking what grass the sheep had left them.

Through the valley, bordered by willows, coiled the river. Nearer was the green oblong of the Goose Common. Even closer to hand stood the two great elms that once had marked the entrance to Colonel Coffin's. Jazan was sure that her eyes deceived her. Three weeks only had she been away, first to Boston and then to Wachusett. In so short a time a new house could not be rising above the old cellar hole. She could see carpenters crawling upon the roof like ants, see the blows of their hammers, and the next moment hear them.

"It seems," said Gervase, "Colonel Coffin had a grandson. He has come out from Duxbury to lay claim to the Coffin estate. And Orde, too—Jimmy is rebuilding the inn to twice the size it was in his father's day. Now they are all back—all those

who will ever come. They say one out of every ten men of fighting age has died in this war. And Plymouth Colony . . . her debts are many times greater than every scrap of land or house or bit of gear, down to the last iron pot, there is in Plymouth Colony. We of the Bay are not much better off. Can you not see yonder the smoke from Preserved English's new forge? At first it was thought the old man would never recover from Mercuricus's death. But he's taken a young smith in to join him. The Hurlinghearts? No, they sailed for England. Never had they the stomach for the life over here. Ralph Denning has bought the Truly farm. He is going to marry Dick Blue's widow. Paul's widow goes with her father to England."

Above was the wild September sky. Across it great clouds raced before the wind with white and bellying sails set, towering like galleons. And below was the valley, green with summer but already showing the yellows of harvest time.

"Yonder at Baileys' Acres . . . they are building a new barn, the largest ever seen. The old one is made tight and fast for a dwelling."

Jazan said, "Have they taken down the palisades from about the meeting-house? Can it be we are as safe as that?"

"There's nothing more to fear from Indians hereabout. At Paradise, too, only yesterday the last of the palisades were carried to the saw-pit."

She realized now that she had dreaded to return to the shuttered, guarded old house. Now it would be as it always had been, a black but lovely house, set seemly wise upon its bank above the river. It was a garrison no longer, but her home. It was here she and Isobel would live, with "Sesek" and doubtless others as well. But in her heart she would dwell

alone. For a little while. For how long, she did not know—but first she must be alone.

Time, she knew, would cure the ache in her heart for the man she never should have loved and who never should have loved her; and surely, never should they have married. Ger-vase, too, understood that ache and respected it. She willing, he would go away. God willing, he would return.

The young black mare lifted her head, her nostrils trembling, her ears pricked. Tobey raised his white muzzle to see what she saw. The horses, as well as the man and woman, gazed before them over the peaceful valley.



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